DEAD@17

the complete collection

JOSH HOWARD

DEAD@17™

To Nara -
Happy Sweet 16th
Love, Mom & Dad

HELL

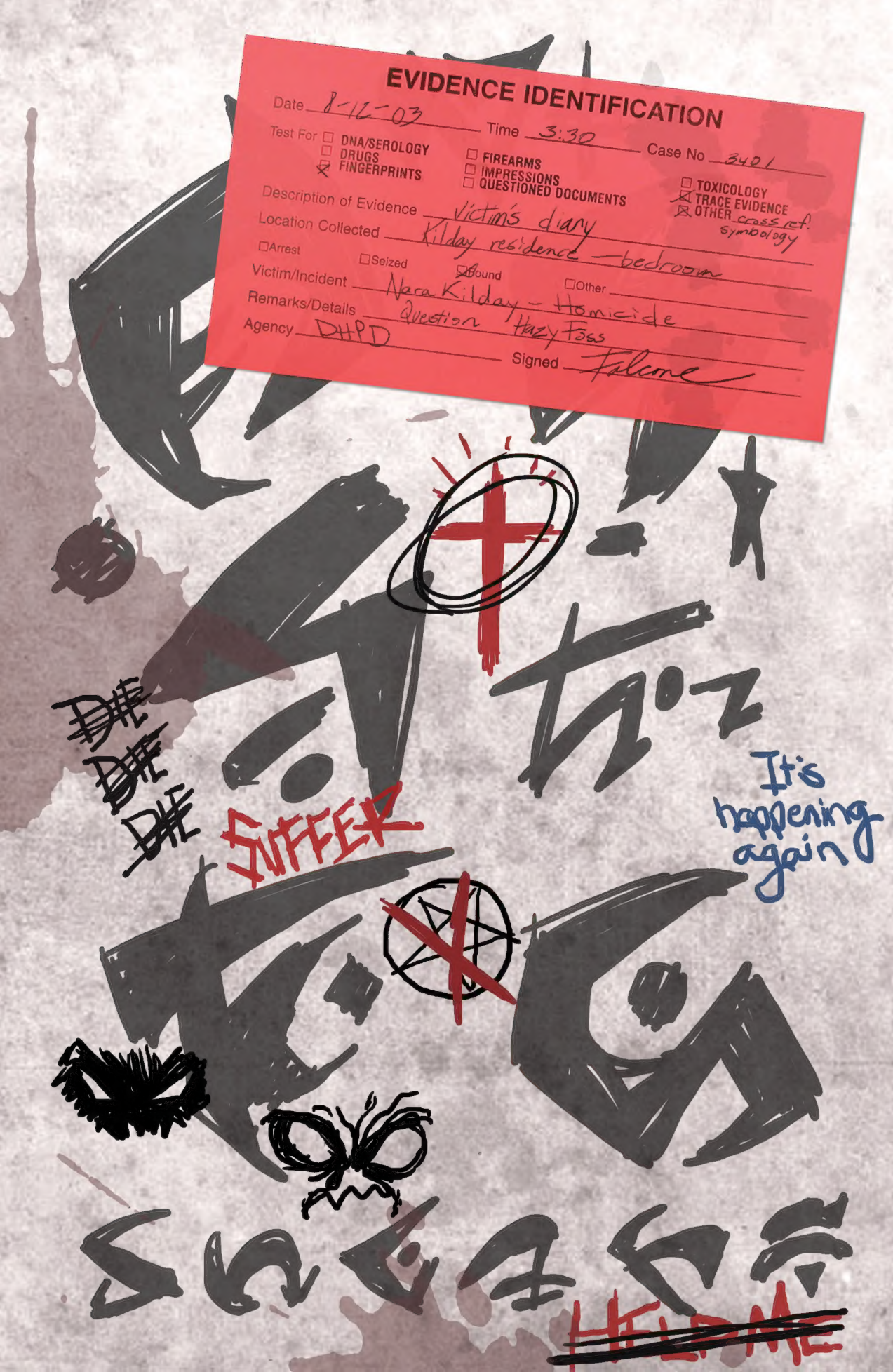
This ~~Book~~ Belongs to:
Nara Kolday
AGE ~~16~~ 17

Love you!
-Hazy

SHE DOESN'T REALLY LOVE YOU

~~4 Yea, though~~ I walk through the valley o
the shadow of death, I will fear ~~no~~ evil:
~~for thou art with me; thy rod and thy sta~~
~~they comfort me.~~

~~5 Thou preparest a table before me in the~~
~~presence of mine enemies: thou anointest~~
~~y head with oil~~; my cup runneth over.


EVIDENCE IDENTIFICATION
Date 8-12-03
Time 3:30
Case No 3401
Test For ☐ DNA/SEROLOGY ☐ DRUGS ☒ FINGERPRINTS
☐ FIREARMS ☐ IMPRESSIONS ☐ QUESTIONED DOCUMENTS
☐ TOXICOLOGY ☒ TRACE EVIDENCE ☒ OTHER cross ref. symbology
Description of Evidence victim's diary
Location Collected Kilday residence — bedroom
☐ Arrest ☐ Seized ☒ Found ☐ Other
Victim/Incident Nora Kilday — Homicide
Remarks/Details Question Hazy Foss
Agency DHPD
Signed Falcone
DIE DIE DIE
SUFFER
It's happening again
HELP ME

DEAD@17™

the complete collection

BY

JOSH HOWARD

LETTERS IN BOOKS 1-4 BY
GREG GATLIN, TONY GARZA &
JIM RESNOWSKI

SPECIAL THANKS TO PATRICK BUSSEY

THIS EDITION COLLECTS
DEAD@17 VOL. 1 - 7

WWW.JOSHHOWARD.NET

IMAGE COMICS, INC. - WWW.IMAGECOMICS.COM

ROBERT KIRKMAN - CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
ERIK LARSEN - CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER
TODD McFARLANE - PRESIDENT
MARC SILVESTRI - CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
JIM VALENTINO - VICE-PRESIDENT
ERIC STEPHENSON - PUBLISHER
COREY MURPHY - DIRECTOR OF SALES
JEREMY SULLIVAN - DIRECTOR OF DIGITAL SALES

KAT SALAZAR - DIRECTOR OF PR & MARKETING
EMILY MILLER - DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS
BRANWYN BIGGLESTONE - SENIOR ACCOUNTS MANAGER
SARAH MELLO - ACCOUNTS MANAGER
DREW GILL - ART DIRECTOR
JONATHAN CHAN - PRODUCTION MANAGER
MEREDITH WALLACE - PRINT MANAGER
RANDY OKAMURA - MARKETING PRODUCTION DESIGNER

DAVID BROTHERS - BRANDING MANAGER
ALLY POWER - CONTENT MANAGER
ADDISON DUKE - PRODUCTION ARTIST
VINCENT KUKUA - PRODUCTION ARTIST
SASHA HEAD - PRODUCTION ARTIST
TRICIA RAMOS - PRODUCTION ARTIST
EMILIO BAUTISTA - DIGITAL SALES ASSOCIATE
CHLOE RAMOS-PETERSON - ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

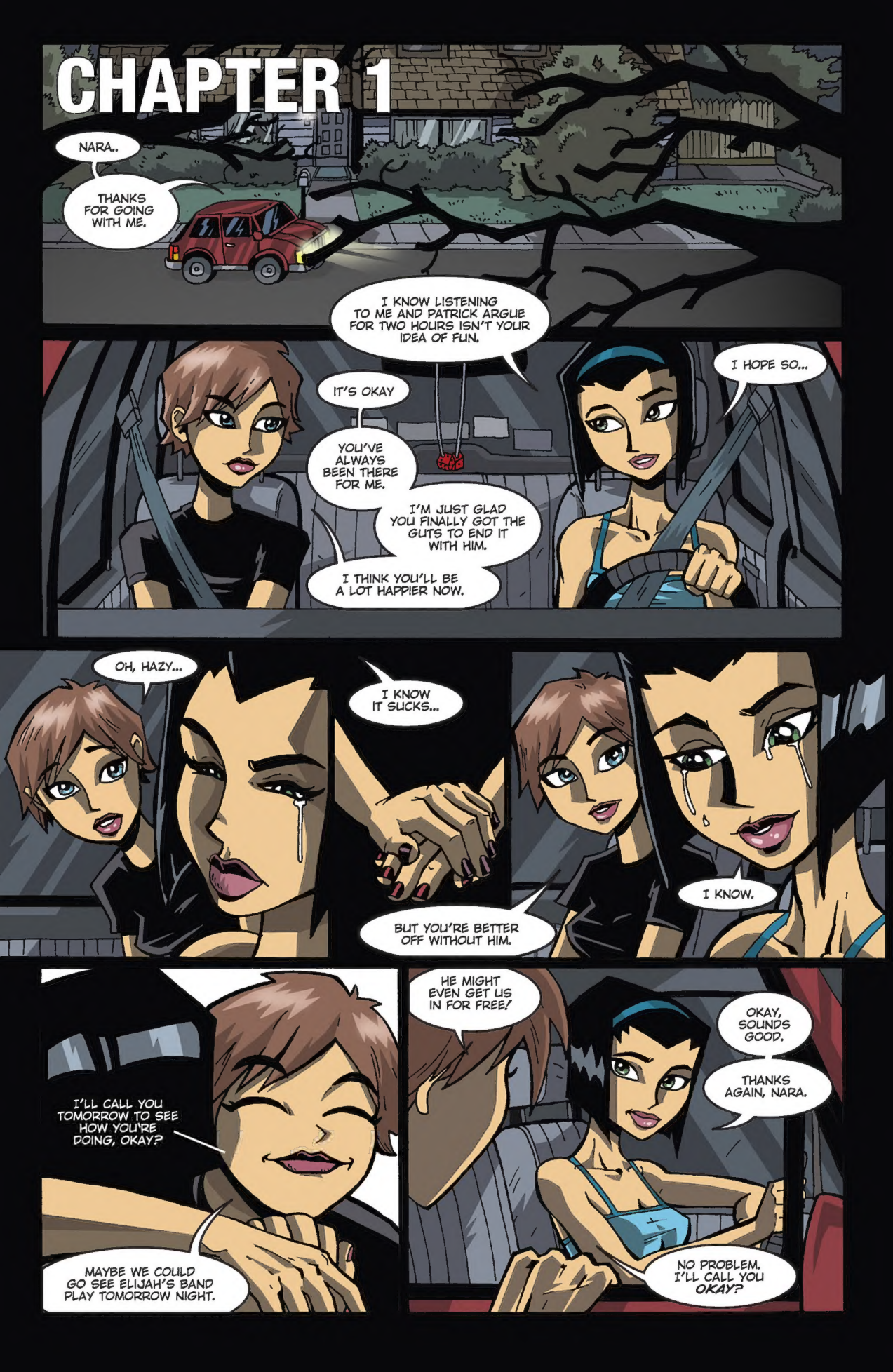
FOR INTERNATIONAL RIGHTS, CONTACT: FOREIGNLICENSING@IMAGECOMICS.COM

DEAD@17: THE COMPLETE COLLECTION

Published by Image Comics, Inc. Office of publication: 2001 Center Street, 6th Floor, Berkeley, CA 94704. Copyright © 2015 Josh Howard. Originally published in single magazine form as DEAD@17 #1-4, DEAD@17: BLOOD OF SAINTS #1-4, DEAD@17: REVOLUTION #1-4, DEAD@17: THE 13TH BROTHER #1-4, DEAD@17: AFTERBIRTH #1-4, DEAD@17: THE WITCH QUEEN #1-4, DEAD@17: THE BLASPHEMY THRONE #1-7. All rights reserved. DEAD@17™ (including all prominent characters featured herein), its logo and all character likenesses are trademarks of Josh Howard, unless otherwise noted. Image Comics® and its logos are registered trademarks and copyright of Image Comics, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means (except for short excerpts for review purposes) without the express written permission of Image Comics, Inc. All names, characters, events and locales in this publication are entirely fictional. Any resemblance to actual persons (living or dead), events or places, without satiric intent, is coincidental.

DIGITAL EDITION.

BOOK 1
dead@17


CHAPTER 1
NARA..
THANKS FOR GOING WITH ME.
I KNOW LISTENING TO ME AND PATRICK ARGUE FOR TWO HOURS ISN'T YOUR IDEA OF FUN.
I HOPE SO...
IT'S OKAY
YOU'VE ALWAYS BEEN THERE FOR ME.
I'M JUST GLAD YOU FINALLY GOT THE GUTS TO END IT WITH HIM.
I THINK YOU'LL BE A LOT HAPPIER NOW.
OH, HAZY...
I KNOW IT SUCKS...
I KNOW.
BUT YOU'RE BETTER OFF WITHOUT HIM.
I'LL CALL YOU TOMORROW TO SEE HOW YOU'RE DOING, OKAY?
MAYBE WE COULD GO SEE ELIJAH'S BAND PLAY TOMORROW NIGHT.
HE MIGHT EVEN GET US IN FOR FREE!
OKAY, SOUNDS GOOD.
THANKS AGAIN, NARA.
NO PROBLEM. I'LL CALL YOU OKAY?

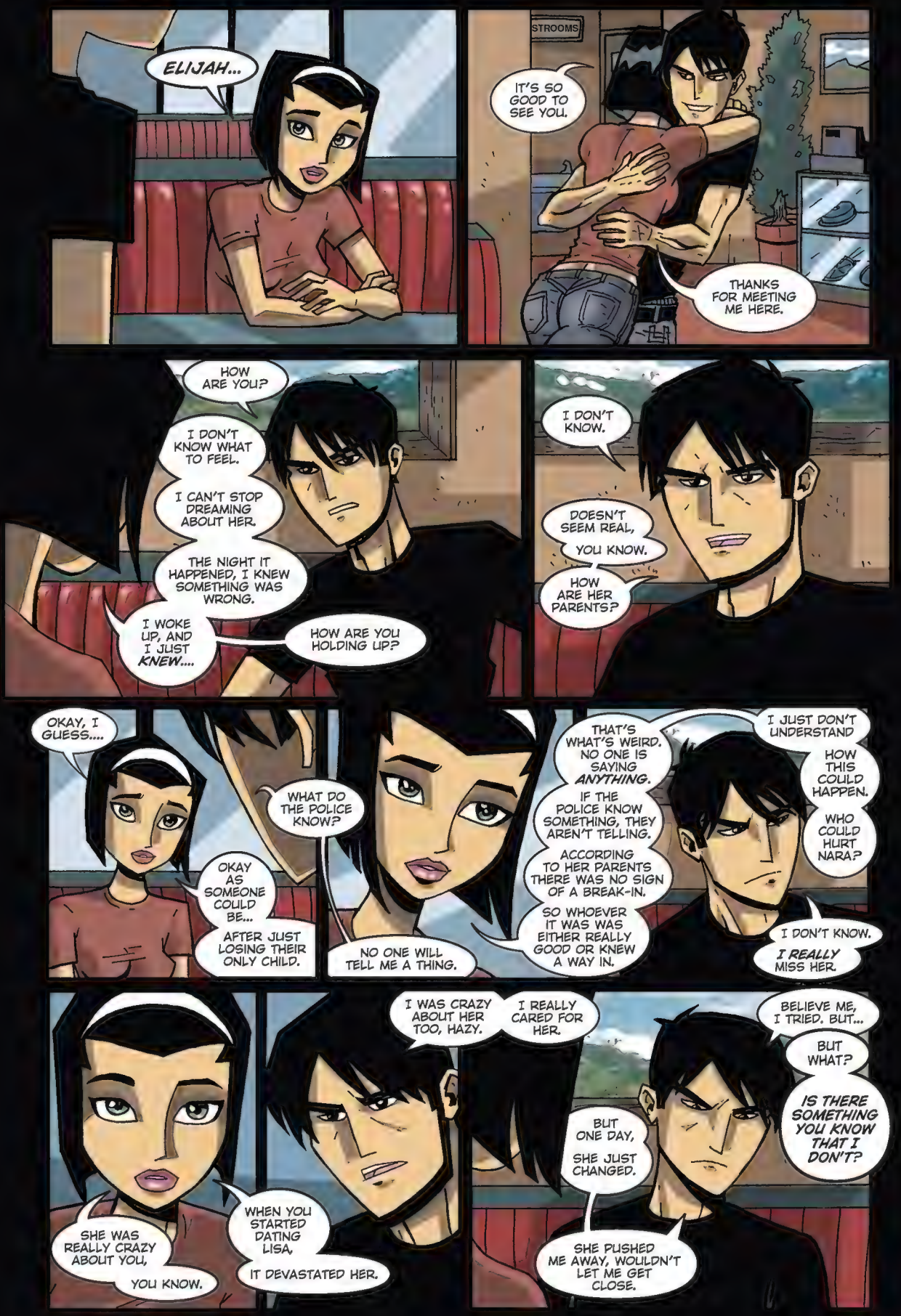
THUD
...MOM...?
...DAD...?
!
PLEASE...!
NO...!
AAAAH!!

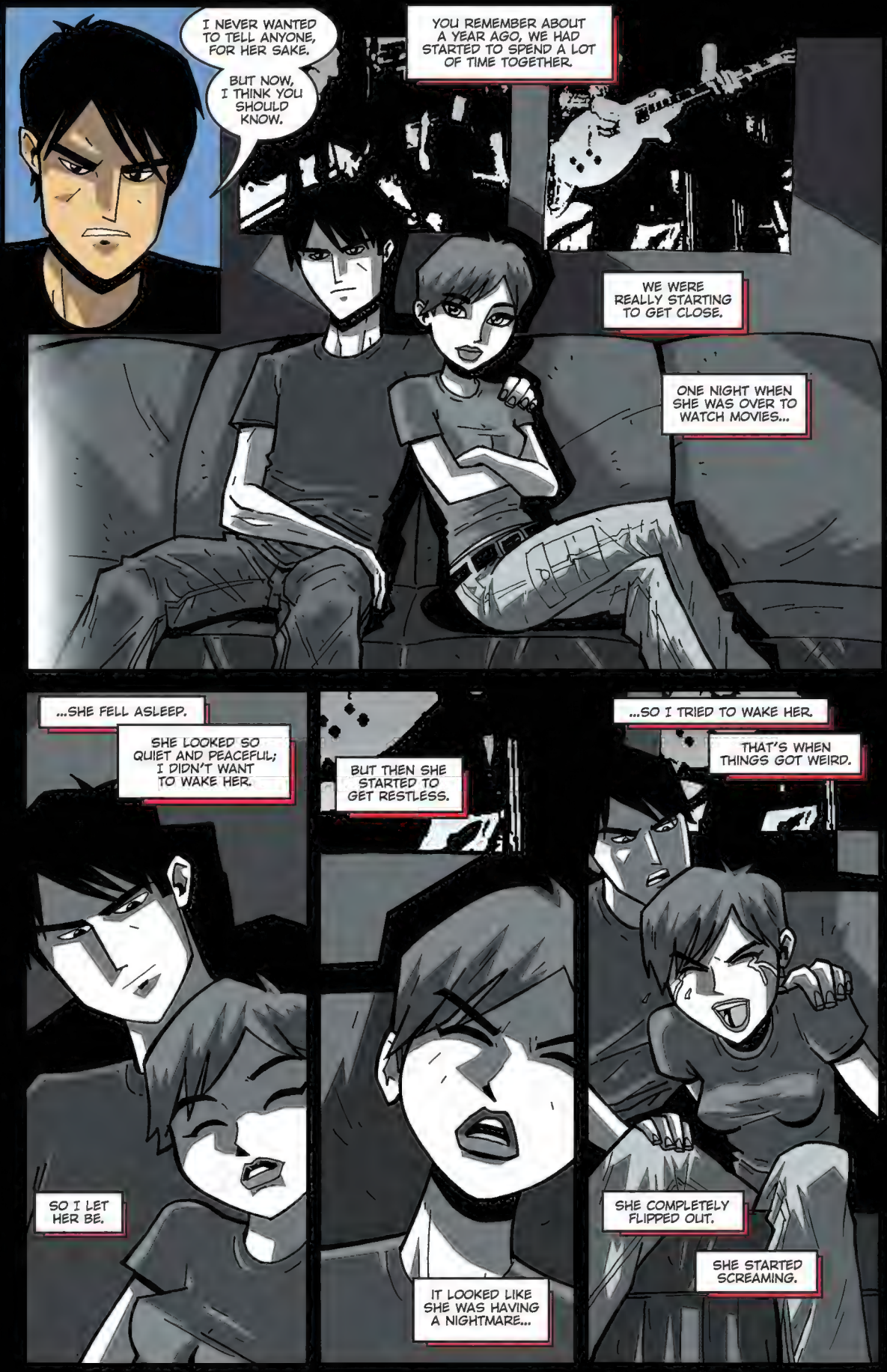
P
P
PLEASE
UH!
THUK
...UHHH...
THUK

NO...
NARA!

IN LOVING MEMORY
NARA LEIGH KILDAY
JULY 5, 1986 - AUG. 12, 2003
"AN ANGEL DEPARTED"
HELLO.
MS. FOSS?
YOU ARE MS. HAZY FOSS, CORRECT?
I'M SPECIAL AGENT NOEL RADDEMER.
I'M HERE INVESTIGATING NARA'S CASE.
I'M TERRIBLY SORRY TO BOTHER YOU.
NARA WAS YOUR BEST FRIEND...
WASN'T SHE?

...YES
WELL, I WAS JUST WONDERING
IF YOU COULD SPARE A FEW MINUTES TO TALK,
MAYBE ANSWER A FEW QUESTIONS.
I BELIEVE THERE'S A LOT MORE TO THIS CASE THAN WHAT THE POLICE ARE TELLING US.
I REALLY DON'T FEEL LIKE TALKING RIGHT NOW.
I UNDERSTAND, MS. FOSS...
BUT IT IS VERY IMPORTANT I SPEAK WITH YOU.
I HAVE SOME OTHER LEADS I NEED TO FOLLOW UP ON,
BUT I WILL BE IN TOUCH WITH YOU SHORTLY.
I'M...SORRY ABOUT YOUR LOSS.
ALL U CAN EAT! $3.99
OPEN
OPEN


ELIJAH...
STROOMS
IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE YOU.
THANKS FOR MEETING ME HERE.
HOW ARE YOU?
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO FEEL.
I CAN'T STOP DREAMING ABOUT HER.
THE NIGHT IT HAPPENED, I KNEW SOMETHING WAS WRONG.
I WOKE UP, AND I JUST KNEW....
HOW ARE YOU HOLDING UP?
I DON'T KNOW.
DOESN'T SEEM REAL, YOU KNOW.
HOW ARE HER PARENTS?
OKAY, I GUESS....
WHAT DO THE POLICE KNOW?
OKAY AS SOMEONE COULD BE... AFTER JUST LOSING THEIR ONLY CHILD.
NO ONE WILL TELL ME A THING.
THAT'S WHAT'S WEIRD. NO ONE IS SAYING ANYTHING.
IF THE POLICE KNOW SOMETHING, THEY AREN'T TELLING.
ACCORDING TO HER PARENTS THERE WAS NO SIGN OF A BREAK-IN.
SO WHOEVER IT WAS WAS EITHER REALLY GOOD OR KNEW A WAY IN.
I JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW THIS COULD HAPPEN.
WHO COULD HURT NARA?
I DON'T KNOW. I REALLY MISS HER.
SHE WAS REALLY CRAZY ABOUT YOU, YOU KNOW.
WHEN YOU STARTED DATING LISA, IT DEVASTATED HER.
I WAS CRAZY ABOUT HER TOO, HAZY.
I REALLY CARED FOR HER.
BUT ONE DAY, SHE JUST CHANGED.
SHE PUSHED ME AWAY, WOULDN'T LET ME GET CLOSE.
BELIEVE ME, I TRIED. BUT...
BUT WHAT?
IS THERE SOMETHING YOU KNOW THAT I DON'T?


I NEVER WANTED TO TELL ANYONE, FOR HER SAKE.
BUT NOW, I THINK YOU SHOULD KNOW.
YOU REMEMBER ABOUT A YEAR AGO, WE HAD STARTED TO SPEND A LOT OF TIME TOGETHER.
WE WERE REALLY STARTING TO GET CLOSE.
ONE NIGHT WHEN SHE WAS OVER TO WATCH MOVIES...
...SHE FELL ASLEEP.
SHE LOOKED SO QUIET AND PEACEFUL; I DIDN'T WANT TO WAKE HER.
SO I LET HER BE.
BUT THEN SHE STARTED TO GET RESTLESS.
IT LOOKED LIKE SHE WAS HAVING A NIGHTMARE...
...SO I TRIED TO WAKE HER.
THAT'S WHEN THINGS GOT WEIRD.
SHE COMPLETELY FLIPPED OUT.
SHE STARTED SCREAMING.

I TRIED CALMING HER DOWN...
...AND SHE HIT ME.
SHE WAS YELLING THINGS...
STRANGE THINGS...
...SOMETHING ABOUT EVIL...
...AND DEMONS.
SHE KEPT SCREAMING FOR THEM TO LEAVE HER ALONE.
SHE WASN'T HERSELF, HAZY.
EVENTUALLY SHE CALMED DOWN, AND WENT RIGHT BACK TO SLEEP.

A LITTLE LATER SHE WOKE UP...
...AND SHE SEEMED OKAY, LIKE IT NEVER HAPPENED.
AT FIRST I THOUGHT THAT SHE DIDN'T REMEMBER, AND THAT SHE HAD JUST HAD A BAD NIGHTMARE.
BUT AS SHE WAS LEAVING,
SHE TURNED TO ME AND JUST LOOKED AT ME.
SHE NEVER SAID A WORD, BUT I COULD SEE IN HER EYES THAT SHE WAS AWARE OF EVERYTHING THAT HAD JUST HAPPENED.
SHE DIDN'T EVEN SPEAK TO ME FOR NEARLY A MONTH AFTER THAT.
BUT EVEN ONCE SHE FINALLY DID...
...THINGS WERE NEVER THE SAME BETWEEN US.
I TRIED TALKING TO HER ABOUT IT...
...I TRIED EVERYTHING...
...BUT SHE ALWAYS CLOSED ME OFF.
EVENTUALLY, I JUST MOVED ON.
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT ELSE I COULD DO..
....BESIDES TRY TO BE HER FRIEND.
YOU NEVER KNEW ANY OF THIS?
SHE NEVER TOLD YOU?
NO.
SHE COULD'VE COME TO ME ABOUT ANYTHING.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY SHE FELT SHE COULDN'T TELL ME SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
I WISH I WOULD'VE DONE SOMETHING MORE...
...I WISH...
I KNOW.

POLICE HEADQUARTERS.
MS FOSS, I JUST WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT WE DO NOT AT ALL CONSIDER YOU A SUSPECT.
WE JUST WANT YOU TO HELP US ANSWER SOME QUESTIONS...
...AND HOPEFULLY FIND WHO IT IS THAT MURDERED YOUR FRIEND.
ALL WE ASK IS THAT YOU GIVE US YOUR FULL COOPERATION.
UNDERSTOOD?
YES, SIR.
EVIDENCE
46-01
GOOD.
NOW, ACCORDING TO YOUR WRITTEN STATEMENT,
YOU AND MS KILDAY HAD SPENT THE EVENING TOGETHER.
YOU TOOK HER HOME AT APPROXIMATELY 11:47 PM.
THIS WAS THE LAST TIME YOU SAW HER ALIVE, CORRECT?
YES.
HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE HER MOOD THAT EVENING?
UMM, FINE.
SHE SEEMED FINE.
DIDN'T SEEM DISTRESSED AT ALL?
SHE WASN'T UPSET?
NO.
ANY ENEMIES?
NO, NONE.
NARA REALLY KEPT TO HERSELF...
...SHE DIDN'T BOTHER ANYONE.
I CAN'T IMAGINE WHY ANYONE WOULD WANT TO HURT HER.
HOW WELL DID YOU KNOW NARA?
I'D LIKE TO THINK PRETTY WELL.
PROBABLY BETTER THAN ANYONE BESIDES HER PARENTS.
WE'D BEEN FRIENDS SINCE WE WERE 12 OR 13.
DID SHE EVER HAVE EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS?
SEVERE MOOD SWINGS?
BOUTS OF DEPRESSION?
NO, NO MORE THAN ANY OTHER GIRL OUR AGE.
WAS MS. KILDAY INVOLVED IN THE OCCULT?
WHAT?
THE OCCULT. WITCHCRAFT. SATANISM.
ARE YOU CRAZY?
THIS IS A JOKE, RIGHT?

NO, MS. FOSS, NO JOKE.
I'M VERY SERIOUS.
WHAT IS THAT?
HER DIARY.
DIARY OF Nara Kilday
I....
I DIDN'T KNOW NARA KEPT A DIARY.
THERE'S APPARENTLY A LOT YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT YOUR BEST FRIEND.
HIDDEN LAKE.
C'MON!
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?
TAKE IF OFF!
I DON'T KNOW....
IT LOOKS KINDA COLD.
BESIDES, YOU PROMISED TO TAKE OFF EVERYTHING!
OH, YOU BIG BABY...
GET IN.
I'M NOT GETTING NAKED UNTIL YOU DO.

ALRIGHT, FINE, BUT TURN AROUND.
OH, GEEZ. FINE. JUST HURRY.
I'M GIVING YOU FIVE MORE SECONDS.
5...4...
3...
2...
1!
OKAY, NOW WHEN I TURN AROUND...
...YOU'D BETTER BE NAKED AND IN THE WATER.
LET'S SEE...
BRIAN?
BRIAN, WHERE ARE YOU?
THIS HAD BETTER NOT BE SOME KIND OF JOKE.
BRIAN!
THIS ISN'T FUNNY!

AAAAH!!!
FRIDAY 17
STOP
Please
SUNDAY 19
I want it to STOP
THIS HAS TO BE A MISTAKE!
THIS CAN'T BE NARA'S

IT WAS TAKEN FROM HER BEDROOM.
IT'S HERS, I ASSURE YOU.
HER MOTHER CONFIRMED IT.
DID YOU SHOW HER ANY OF THIS?
NO.
NOT YET.
WE'D THOUGHT IT BEST IF WE CHECK IT OUT FIRST...
...WHICH IS WHY WE BROUGHT YOU IN.
LET ME TELL YOU, YOUR FRIEND WAS A SERIOUSLY DISTURBED YOUNG LADY.
TUESDAY 21
I READ MOST OF IT.
IT STARTS OFF NORMAL ENOUGH, TYPICAL TEENAGE GIRL STUFF.
THEN, AROUND THE TIME SHE TURNED 16, IT LOOKS LIKE SHE STARTED TO SNAP.
STARTED HEARING VOICES, SEEING THINGS.
IT LOOKS LIKE AFTER THAT SHE BEGAN TO TAKE AN INTEREST IN THE OCCULT...
...TALKING ABOUT DEMONS, HELL, THINGS LIKE THAT.
TOWARDS THE END, HER WRITING BECOMES MORE AND MORE INCOHERENT AND ERRATIC.
THIS GIRL GOT INVOLVED WITH SOMETHING...
...SOMETHING THAT I BELIEVE GOT HER KILLED.
ARE YOU SURE YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT ALL OF THIS?
NO!
I DON'T BELIEVE ANY OF THIS!
THIS WASN'T HER.
SHE WAS NOTHING LIKE THAT!
DETECTIVE FALCONE.
WE JUST GOT A REPORT...
THAT TWO TEENAGERS WERE ATTACKED AT HIDDEN LAKE HARBOR.
IT MAY BE OUR GUY.
THANK YOU, OFFICER.
MS. FOSS, YOU STAY PUT.
I'LL HAVE SOMEONE GIVE YOU A RIDE HOME.
AM I STILL GONNA HAVE TO TALK TO THE FBI, TOO?
MS. FOSS...
THE FBI IS NOT INVOLVED WITH THIS CASE.
NOT YET, ANYWAY.
DIARY OF
Nora Kilday

LATER.
WHERE THE HELL HAVE YOU BEEN?
I TOLD YOU, MOM.
I HAD TO TALK TO THE POLICE TODAY.
WHAT DID YOU DO THIS TIME?
MOM, I HAD TO TALK TO THEM ABOUT NARA.
SHE WAS KILLED, REMEMBER?!!
DON'T RAISE YOUR VOICE TO ME...
YOU LITTLE TRAMP!
I HATE YOU!
SLAM

ELIJAH?
HAZY, IS THAT YOU?
YES, ELIJAH.
I NEED TO SEE YOU.
CAN YOU MEET ME AT THE KWIK STOP...
...BY MY PLACE, ON TWIN POINTS ROAD...
IN ABOUT 30 MINUTES?
I DON'T KNOW.
LISA AND I HAVE PLANS-
I DON'T CARE ELIJAH.
THIS IS IMPORTANT.
IT'S ABOUT NARA.
...ALRIGHT, FINE.
I'LL SEE YOU IN 30 MINUTES.
MOM?
MOM!
IS EVERYTHING ALRIGHT?

CRACKKK
AAAAHHH!!
UHHH
UHHH

NO!
STAY AWAY FROM ME!
MMMPHH!
GRRAAACHH!
ARGHHH!

CRACK!
THUNK
WHACK!
THOK
KA-THRACK!

OH MY GOSH...

SOMEWHERE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF DARLINGTON HILLS...

CHAPTER 2

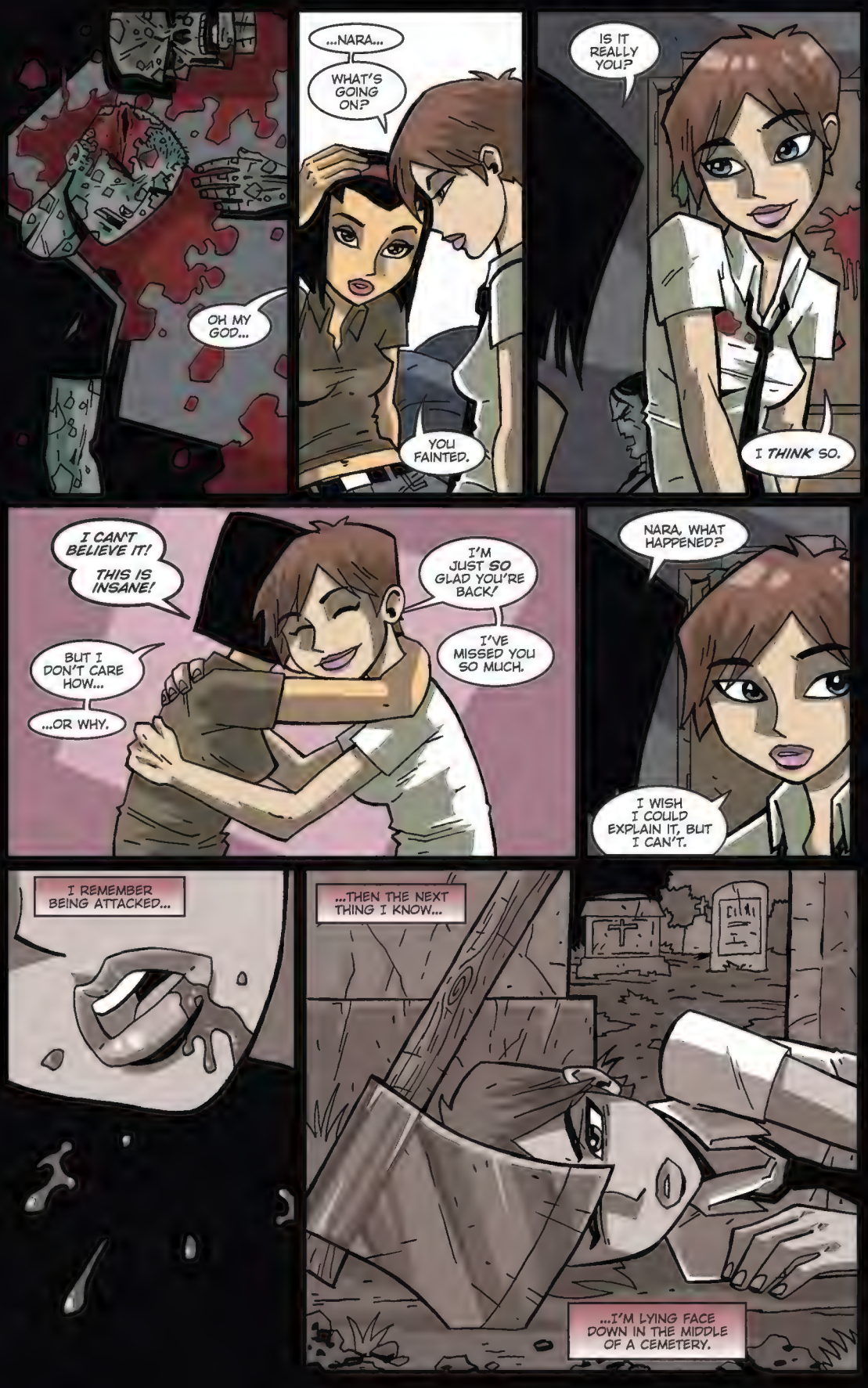
HAVE YOU HEARD WHAT'S GOING ON?
HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF KNOCKING?

ALL HELL IS BREAKING LOOSE OUT THERE!
THIS IS YOUR IDEA OF SUBTLE?
DROP THE HYSTERICS AND TRY TO TALK TO ME LIKE A SANE PERSON.
....THE FIFTH REPORTED ATTACK TONIGHT.
POLICE HAVE YET TO APPREHEND ANY SUSPECTS...
...BUT THEY ARE SAYING THAT THERE APPEARS TO BE MULTIPLE GROUPS OF ATTACKERS.
WHETHER THIS IS AN ORGANIZED GANG OR TERRORIST RELATED EFFORT,
OR IF THIS IS RANDOM RIOTING, POLICE ARE UNSURE AT THIS TIME.
THEY ARE URGING THAT EVERYONE STAY INDOORS AND DO NOT FLOOD 911 WITH CALLS.
THEY ARE DOING THIER BEST TO --
SOUNDS LIKE A MESS.
THIS WHOLE THING HAS GOTTEN OUT OF HAND, DARGO!
IT'S SLOPPY.
MR. PITCH IS IN COMPLETE CONTROL OF THE SITUATION.
YOU ARE NOT HAVING DOUBTS NOW, ARE YOU, SIMON?
MAYBE YOU SHOULD GO HAVE ANOTHER TALK WITH MR. PITCH, PROFESSOR.
IT SEEMS WE'VE ATTRACTED SOME UNWANTED ATTENTION.

...RADDEMER...
WHERE DID YOU GET THESE?
I TOOK THEM.
I SAW HIM HANGING AROUND AT THE GIRL'S FUNERAL AND DECIDED TO TAIL HIM.
HE KNOWS NOTHING, AND BY THE TIME HE DOES...
WE'RE FINISHED.
...IT WILL BE TOO LATE.
NO! YOU'RE WRONG!
HE KNOWS ABOUT THE GIRL!
HE WAS AT HER FUNERAL.
OF COURSE HE KNOWS ABOUT THE GIRL.
THAT DOESN'T MEAN HE KNOWS ABOUT US.
IT WON'T TAKE HIM LONG TO FIGURE IT OUT.
I NEVER SHOULD HAVE AGREED TO BE A PART OF THIS!
YOU WANT OUT?
IT'S TOO LATE NOW!
YOU BELONG TO US, SIMON!
YOU MADE ME COMMIT MURDER!

WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO PUT AN END TO YOUR GUILT?
BECAUSE I CAN MAKE THAT HAPPEN FOR YOU RIGHT NOW!
YOU WANTED THIS REMEMBER?!!
...YOU WANTED TO PLAY A PART IN THE COMING OF THE NEW ORDER.
WHAT IF WE WERE WRONG?
WHAT IF SHE'S NOT THE ONE?
THE MASTER IS CONFIDENT THAT SHE IS.
HE HAS FELT HER POWER.
SOON SHE WILL OVERCOME DEATH AND BE READY TO FULFILL HER ROLE AS INCUBATOR.
YOU DID WHAT HAD TO BE DONE, SIMON.
YOU ARE A HERO TO THE CAUSE.
NOW, WHY DON'T YOU GO HOME,
RELAX,
GET SOME SLEEP.
I'M SURE EVERYTHING WILL BE CLEAR TO YOU IN THE MORNING.
I WILL DEAL WITH THE RADDEMER SITUATION...
...AND WILL SPEAK WITH YOU TOMORROW, OKAY?
I MUST SEE YOU NOW!

HAZY...
C'MON, HAZY WAKE UP.
HEY, YOU.
NARA?
I HAD THIS HORRIBLE NIGHTMARE.
YOU WERE KILLED, THEN THERE WERE THESE ZOMBIES, AND THEN YOU CAME BACK FROM THE DEAD AND SAVED ME.
YOU'RE RIGHT, THAT IS PRETTY CRAZY.

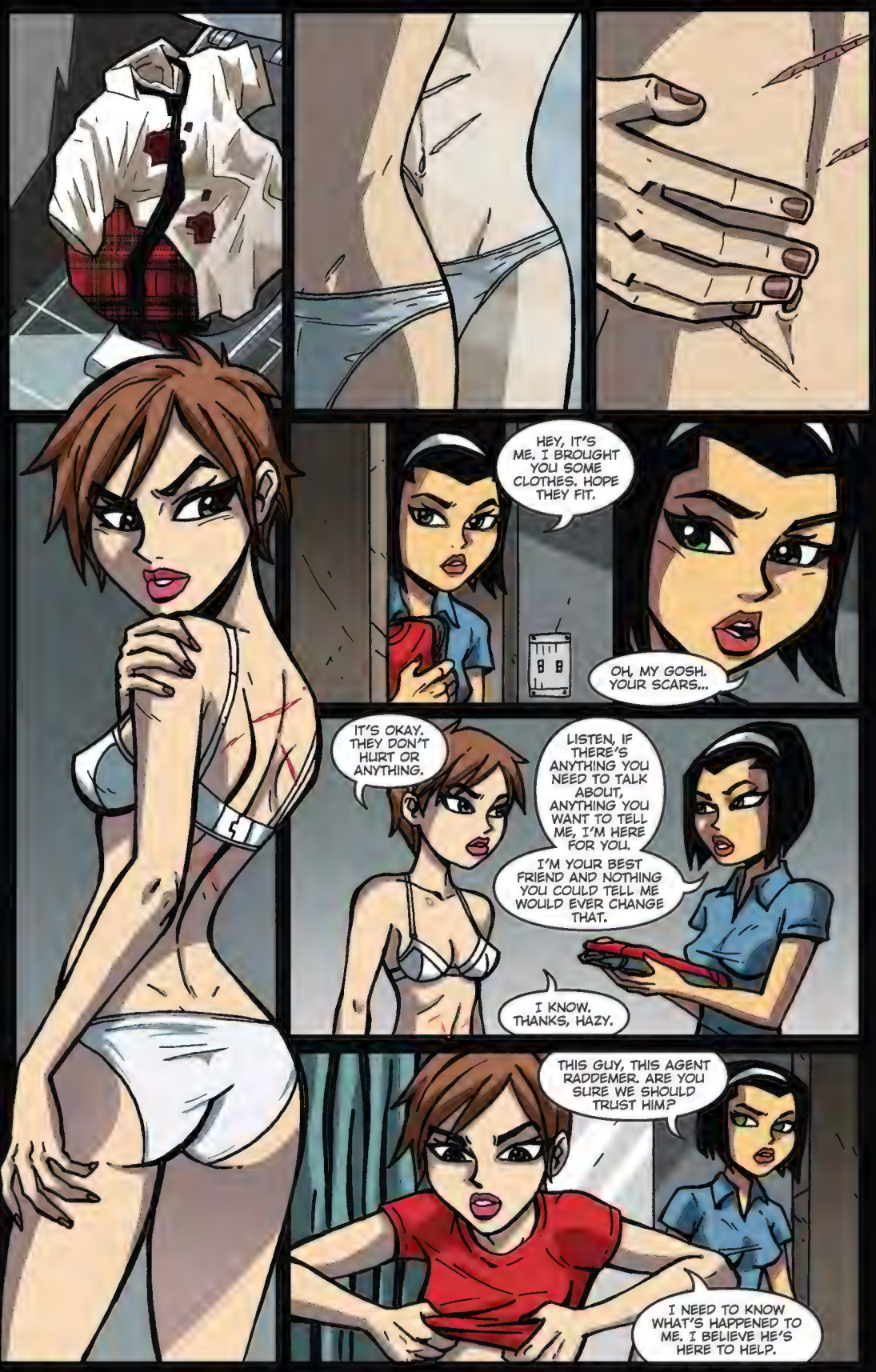

OH MY GOD...
...NARA...
WHAT'S GOING ON?
YOU FAINTED.
IS IT REALLY YOU?
I THINK SO.
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! THIS IS INSANE!
BUT I DON'T CARE HOW...
...OR WHY.
I'M JUST SO GLAD YOU'RE BACK!
I'VE MISSED YOU SO MUCH.
NARA, WHAT HAPPENED?
I WISH I COULD EXPLAIN IT, BUT I CAN'T.
I REMEMBER BEING ATTACKED...
...THEN THE NEXT THING I KNOW...
...I'M LYING FACE DOWN IN THE MIDDLE OF A CEMETERY.

AND THEN... THEN *THEY* WERE EVERYWHERE.
I KNEW YOU WERE IN DANGER.
I KNEW I HAD TO FIND YOU.
I FOUGHT AND FOUGHT AND GOT HERE AS QUICK AS I COULD.

WHAT ARE THEY?
ARE YOU... ONE OF THEM?
NO!
SHE'S NOT.
WHO ARE YOU?!
WHAT DO YOU WANT?!
I BELIEVE I'VE ALREADY INTRODUCED MYSELF...
"AGENT" NOEL RADDEMER?
THAT'S A LIE!
I TALKED TO THE POLICE, AND THEY SAID THERE'S NO FBI INVOLVED IN NARA'S CASE.
WHO ARE YOU REALLY?
I NEVER SAID I WAS WITH THE FBI, OR ANY GOVERNMENT AGENCY FOR THAT MATTER.
THAT WAS AN ASSUMPTION ON YOUR PART.
THE PEOPLE I WORK FOR DEAL WITH FAR MORE SERIOUS MATTERS THAN THE FBI.
NARA?
YES?

YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THIS MOMENT MEANS TO ME.
I'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR YOU FOR A VERY LONG TIME.
ME? WHY?
THAT'S SOMETHING THAT'S GOING TO TAKE A WHILE TO EXPLAIN.
BUT BY NOW YOU'VE PROBABLY FIGURED OUT THAT YOU'RE NOT EXACTLY NORMAL.
I WAS AFRAID THAT I MAY HAVE BEEN TOO LATE.
BUT THE FACT THAT YOU ARE STANDING HERE NOW...
IT PROVES YOU ARE EVERYTHING WE HOPED.
I'M NOT SURE I'M FOLLOWING YOU. ARE YOU SAYING I WAS REALLY... DEAD?
I WILL EXPLAIN MORE LATER.
IT IS URGENT THAT WE GET GOING.
WAIT A SECOND.
WHY SHOULD WE TRUST YOU?
FOR ALL WE KNOW...
...YOU'RE THE ONE THAT KILLED HER IN THE FIRST PLACE.
NO, HAZY, IT'S OKAY.
I BELIEVE WE CAN TRUST HIM.
HAZY, GET NARA SOME FRESH CLOTHES AND SOME FOOD, SHE HASN'T EATEN IN DAYS.
I'M GOING TO CHECK OUTSIDE TO SEE IF EVERYTHING'S CLEAR.
OH, NO...MOM!

DON'T WORRY, I ALREADY CHECKED ON HER.
SHE'S OKAY.
SHE'S PASSED OUT IN THE LIVING ROOM.
I DON'T THINK THEY EVEN NOTICED SHE WAS THERE.
DO YOU HAVE A RELATIVE OR SOMEONE YOU CAN TRUST WHO CAN COME AND KEEP AN EYE ON HER?
I COULD CALL MY BROTHER.
DO IT. AND THE LESS HE KNOWS THE BETTER.
KWIK STOP
OKAY, I'M TIRED OF WAITING, LET'S GO HOME.
SHE TOLD ME TO MEET HER HERE...
SHE'LL BE HERE.
I TOLD YOU NOT TO COME.
OH...
...AND LEAVE YOU ALONE WITH HAZY FOSS?
WHAT?
WHAT DO YOU THINK IS GONNA HAPPEN, LISA?
SHE JUST LOST HER BEST FRIEND.
SHE'S GOING THROUGH A HARD TIME RIGHT NOW.
SHE NEEDS SOMEONE TO TALK TO.
YEAH, I BELIEVE THAT.
I'VE SEEN THE WAY SHE LOOKS AT YOU, ELIJAH.
I DON'T BELIEVE YOU'RE ACTING LIKE THIS.
CAN'T YOU THINK OF SOMEONE BESIDES YOURSELF FOR ONCE.
THIS IS ABOUT NARA.
SHE WAS KILLED, REMEMBER?
DON'T GET ME STARTED ON NARA.
SHE ALWAYS HAD A THING FOR YOU,
AND DON'T PRETEND YOU DIDN'T WANT HER EITHER.
I REALLY DON'T LIKE YOU RIGHT NOW.


HEY, IT'S ME. I BROUGHT YOU SOME CLOTHES. HOPE THEY FIT.
OH, MY GOSH. YOUR SCARS...
IT'S OKAY. THEY DON'T HURT OR ANYTHING.
LISTEN, IF THERE'S ANYTHING YOU NEED TO TALK ABOUT, ANYTHING YOU WANT TO TELL ME, I'M HERE FOR YOU.
I'M YOUR BEST FRIEND AND NOTHING YOU COULD TELL ME WOULD EVER CHANGE THAT.
I KNOW. THANKS, HAZY.
THIS GUY, THIS AGENT RADDEMER. ARE YOU SURE WE SHOULD TRUST HIM?
I NEED TO KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENED TO ME. I BELIEVE HE'S HERE TO HELP.

JUST BE CAREFUL.
I'M NOT ABOUT TO LET MY GUARD DOWN JUST YET.
I'LL LET YOU GET DRESSED.
ACROSS TOWN.
WHAT HAVE I DONE...?
YOU BELONG TO US.
NO!
SMASH
RR-R-RING
WHAT?
SIMON?
IT'S YOUR LITTLE SISTER.

HEY, IS EVERYTHING OKAY? I HEARD ON THE NEWS -
SIMON, LISTEN.
THINGS ARE A LITTLE CRAZY HERE.
I NEED YOU TO COME AND GET MOM.
WHY? WHAT'S GOING ON?
I CAN'T REALLY TALK RIGHT NOW. SIMON...
...NARA'S ALIVE.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I MEAN, ARE YOU SURE??
I HARDLY BELIEVE IT MYSELF, BUT IT'S TRUE...
SIMON, I'M LEAVING SOMETHING FOR YOU UNDER MY BED.
IT'S A DIARY, AND THERE ARE THINGS IN IT I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
YOU'RE THE SMARTEST PERSON I KNOW, AND THE ONLY PERSON I CAN REALLY TRUST RIGHT NOW.
I NEED YOU TO FIGURE OUT WHAT'S IN IT.
UH, SIMON...
...I NEED TO GO NOW.
JUST PLEASE COME AND GET MOM, OKAY.
HAZY, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
I WILL CALL YOU LATER, SIMON, OKAY?
BYE.
EVERYTHING SQUARED AWAY?
UM, YEAH. MY BROTHER'S ON HIS WAY.
GOOD, WHERE'S NARA?
RIGHT BEHIND YOU...

UMM, I JUST REMEMBERED.
I'M SUPPOSED TO BE MEETING SOMEONE RIGHT NOW.
TOO BAD.
GOOD, LET'S GET GOING.
HE'S GONNA WONDER WHERE I'M AT.
HE'LL COME HERE LOOKING FOR ME.
YOU'RE ONE TOO MANY.
NO ONE ELSE IS GETTING INVOLVED.
ELIJAH...!
WE WAITED FOR YOU, AND YOU NEVER CAME.
I THOUGHT I WOULD COME TO SEE IF EVERYTHING WAS OKAY?
WHAT'S GOING ON?
HI, ELIJAH.
NARA!?

YOU SENT FOR ME?
YES.
THE LEGION HAS BEEN SENT FORTH TO FIND THE INCUBATOR
WHY? SHE'S STILL DEAD.
NO. SHE IS MORE POWERFUL THAN WE THOUGHT.
SHE WAS ALREADY RETURNED.
SHE MUST BE FOUND IMMEDIATELY.
WE HAVE A PROBLEM.
RADDEMER IS HERE.
HE MAY HAVE GOTTEN TO HER FIRST.
THEN HE MUST BE STOPPED.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?
THE FIRST THING I'M GOING TO DO IS GET YOU KIDS TO SAFETY.
THINGS ARE GONNA GET UGLY IN DARLINGTON HILLS.
I HAVE ANOTHER AGENT WAITING FOR ME OUTSIDE OF TOWN WHO CAN WATCH OVER YOU UNTIL THIS IS OVER.
HOW ABOUT TELLING US EXACTLY WHAT'S GOING ON?
YOU KNOW TOO MUCH ALREADY.
NO, I THINK YOU OWE ME AN EXPLANATION.
IF YOU CONTINUE TO WANT MY TRUST, I NEED TO KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENED TO ME...
...AND WHO YOU REALLY ARE.
....I AM AN AGENT FOR A GROUP CALLED THE PROTECTORATE.
WE ARE DEDICATED TO IDENTIFYING AND ELIMINATING CERTAIN THREATS TO SOCIETY...
...THREATS OF A SUPERNATURAL NATURE.
THERE ARE MEN WHO WOULD STOP AT NOTHING TO GET YOU, TO USE YOU FOR THEIR OWN ENDS.
WHY ME?
I REALIZE THIS IS A LOT TO TAKE IN ALL AT ONCE...
...BUT YOU ARE....UNIQUE, NARA.
YOU ARE ONE OF WHAT WE CALL THE RESURRECTED.
THROUGH-OUT HISTORY CERTAIN INDIVIDUALS HAVE DEM-ONSTRATED THE PECULIAR ABILITY TO NOT STAY DEAD.
AND I'M ONE OF THEM?
YES.
THESE MEN KNEW THAT BY KILLING YOU, YOUR TRUE POWER WOULD BE UNLEASHED.
IF THEY WERE SOMEHOW ABLE TO USE YOU AND YOUR ABILITIES...
...THE RESULTS WOULD BE DISASTROUS.

YOU'RE FULL OF S#!*.
I DON'T BELIEVE ANY OF THIS.
NARA, THIS IS CRAZY.
DON'T LISTEN TO HIM!
IT'S THE TRUTH WHETHER YOU CHOOSE TO BELIEVE IT OR NOT.
BEFORE THIS NIGHT IS OVER YOU WILL LEARN JUST HOW WRONG YOU ARE.
I DON'T KNOW,
I'M NOT SURE ABOUT ANY OF THIS...
IT'S ALL HAPPENING TOO FAST.
YOU KNOW I'M TELLING THE TRUTH, NARA.
THERE IS A WAR BEING FOUGHT OVER YOUR VERY SOUL.
YOU MUST'VE FELT IT.
NARA, THIS GUY IS A CON MAN.
WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU IS A MIRACLE,
YES...
...BUT WHATEVER THIS GUY IS SELLING...
I'M NOT BUYING, AND NEITHER SHOULD YOU.
ELIJAH...
...I THINK THIS WAS A MISTAKE.
WE SHOULD GO HOME.
IT'S NOT SAFE.
WE'LL TAKE OUR CHANCES.
STOP THE CAR.
ELIJAH, WAIT-
NARA...
...LET'S JUST GET OUT OF HERE.
ALRIGHT, EVERYONE JUST CALM DOWN.
DO AS I SAID!
STOP THE DAMN CAR!
I SUGGEST YOU QUIET DOWN.
YOU'RE REALLY STARTING TO PISS ME OFF.
IF YOU WON'T STOP THE CAR...
I WILL.

EERRRCH
ELIJAH, STOP!
ELIJAH!
SIT DOWN BEFORE YOU KILL US ALL!
NOOO!!
SCREEEECH!!
KA
THUD
ARE YOU INSANE?!
SEE WHAT YOU JUST CAUSED!

OH NO...
JAKE!
OH NO!
JAKE, CAN YOU HEAR ME?
N...NOEL?
JAKE, I'M SO SORRY.
I DIDN'T SEE YOU...
WHAT HAPPENED?
THERE WERE SO MANY OF THEM...
DON'T...
DON'T GO ANY FURTHER...
...THEY'RE EVERYWHERE...
HOLD ON, JAKE. WE'LL GET HELP.
DID YOU FIND HER...
...DID YOU FIND NARA?
SURE DID, OLD FRIEND. YOU WERE RIGHT.
GOOD...
GOOD.
NO!
NO, JAKE.
I NEED YOU!
R-R-RUMBLE
DO YOU HEAR THAT?

WHAT IS THAT?
EVERYONE GET BACK TO THE CAR
NOW!
R-R-RUMBLE
AARRRRRRRRRRR!!!
NARA! I THINK WE SHOULD ALL GET OUT OF HERE NOW!
NO! YOU GUYS GO! I'VE GOT TO HELP HIM!
BLAM!

WHAK!
thwik!

URRRHH!
AAAH!
RRRAAAAGGGHH!!
KA-BLAM!
NARA, LET'S GO!

AAAAAAAAHHHH!
NOEL!!
BLAM!
AAACK!
...MY GOD...
BLAM!
CLICK!
CLICK!
OH, NO....

CHAPTER 3
DIARY OF
Nora Kirkby
HELLO...
MR. DARGO?

GREAT....

AAAAARRRRRHHHH!
NO....!

....NO...!!
NARA!!
....ELIJAH....
THE GLOVE BOX....

DAMN IT!
A LITTLE HELP HERE....
BLAM!
BLAM!
BLAM!
NOT BAD.
YOU OKAY?
I'LL BE FINE.
LISTEN...
I GUESS I WAS WRONG...
I'M SORRY ABOUT-
FORGET IT.
WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO ABOUT NARA?
I'M NOT LOSING HER AGAIN.
-> I JUST WANT TO GO HOME! <-
I PROMISE YOU, I WON'T LET THAT HAPPEN.

GOOD WORK, SIMON.
SOON WE WILL HAVE THE GIRL AND ALL WILL BE-
MY MOTHER AND SISTER COULD'VE BEEN KILLED BY THOSE MONSTERS OF YOURS!
UNFORTUNATELY, WE MUST ALL MAKE SACRIFICES IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS.
I THINK I'VE SACRIFICED ENOUGH ALREADY.
THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT RADDEMER IS DOING TO MY SISTER, WHAT LIES HE'S FILLING HER HEAD WITH.
RADDEMER WILL BE FOUND AND DEALT WITH.
AND YOUR SISTER WILL BE RETURNED TO YOU UNHARMED.
I WANT TO SPEAK WITH MR. PITCH.
WHAT!

I'M TIRED OF BEING LEFT IN THE DARK!
I'M JUST AS VALUABLE A MEMBER OF THIS GROUP AS THE OTHERS.
I THINK THAT I DESERVE TO KNOW MORE ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON, ESPECIALLY CONSIDERING ALL I'VE DONE FOR US.
I UNDERSTAND YOUR FRUSTRATION, BUT WHAT YOU ARE ASKING IS JUST NOT POSSIBLE.
WHY?
PITCH'S MIND IS NOT THE MIND WE ARE IN CONTACT WITH WHEN HE SPEAKS.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
HIS BRAIN AND VOCAL CORDS ARE BEING USED BY ANOTHER MIND.
HE IS A CONDUIT BETWEEN US AND THE OTHER WORLD.
WHETHER MR. PITCH IS ALIVE OR DEAD, THERE IS NO WAY TO KNOW FOR SURE, NOR DOES IT REALLY MATTER, BECAUSE HE HAS ACHIEVED HIS GOAL.
ALL WILL BE MADE CLEAR TO YOU SOON ENOUGH.
OH, MY...
WHAT IS IT?
UNBELIEVABLE....

WHAT IS THAT?
HEALING WATER.
WHAT'S HEALING WATER?
THAT'S CLASSIFIED.
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO TURN INTO A ZOMBIE NOW, ARE YOU?
THESE *AREN'T* MOVIE ZOMBIES.
THEY ARE DEAD BODIES POSSESSED BY EVIL SPIRITS...
DEMONS.
ALRIGHT, LISTEN UP.
I DON'T HAVE TIME TO GET YOU KIDS TO SAFETY.
I'M NOT EVEN SURE IF THERE IS SUCH A PLACE AT THE MOMENT.
WE HAVE NO TIME. WE HAVE TO GET NARA BEFORE THE ENEMY SUCCEEDS.
YOU HAVE ALL SEEN WHAT WE ARE DEALING WITH HERE, AND IT'S ONLY GOING TO GET *WORSE.*
I NEED YOUR *COMPLETE* TRUST AND COOPERATION.
I HAVE CALLED FOR BACKUP, BUT I FEAR THEY WILL NOT MAKE IT IN TIME.
UNDERSTOOD?
HOW DO WE KNOW WHERE TO FIND HER?

THESE ARE THE MEN WE ARE LOOKING FOR.
ABRAHAM PITCH AND HANS DARGO, ALONG WITH THEIR COHORTS.
PITCH AND DARGO WERE ONCE SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE PROTECTORATE.
ABRAHAM PITCH
HANS DARGO
THEY SPLIT FROM OUR GROUP AND FORMED ANOTHER, DEDICATED TO THE STUDY OF THE OCCULT AND ITS PRACTICES
FOR YEARS THEY HAVE OPERATED IN THE SHADOWS, TRYING TO ELUDE US, ALL THE WHILE SEARCHING FOR NARA.
SHE HAD BEEN KILLED ALMOST AS SOON AS WE LOCATED HER.
IT DIDN'T TAKE US LONG TO LEARN THAT PITCH AND HIS MEN WERE INVOLVED.
THEY ARE APPARENTLY POSING AS PROFESSORS AT A LOCAL UNIVERSITY, AND HAVE TAKEN UP RESIDENCE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN.
WHAT ARE THESE?
THESE ARE MEN WE BELIEVE MAY BE WORKING FOR PITCH AND DARGO NOW.
OH MY GOSH!
WHAT IS IT?
THAT...
THAT'S MY BROTHER, SIMON!
YOUR BROTHER?
YES.
HE GOES TO DHLI...
I REMEMBER HIM TELLING ME ABOUT A PROFESSOR THAT TOOK AN INTEREST IN HIM, THAT WANTED TO MENTOR HIM.
THAT'S WHEN HE STARTED TO CHANGE.
WE DIDN'T SEE HIM MUCH AFTER THAT.
I CAN'T BELIEVE HE WOULD BE INVOLVED IN SOMETHING LIKE THIS!

I'M SORRY.
I'VE DONE SOMETHING HORRIBLE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
I JUST DIDN'T TRUST YOU, AND I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT WAS HAPPENING WITH NARA...
I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT ELSE TO DO.
MY BROTHER HAS NARA'S DIARY.
OH, THIS JUST KEEPS GETTING BETTER.
WHAT WAS IN IT?
I DON'T KNOW.
SYMBOLS OF SOME KIND.
DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT THEY LOOKED LIKE?
CAN YOU DRAW THEM FOR ME?
I DON'T KNOW, I CAN TRY.
I THINK THEY LOOKED SOMETHING LIKE THIS....
THIS... THIS IS...
WHAT...
WHAT IS IT?
THESE AREN'T JUST SYMBOLS.
THIS IS AN ANCIENT LANGUAGE - THE ORIGINAL IN FACT. THE TONGUE OF ANGELS AND OLD AS THE UNIVERSE ITSELF.

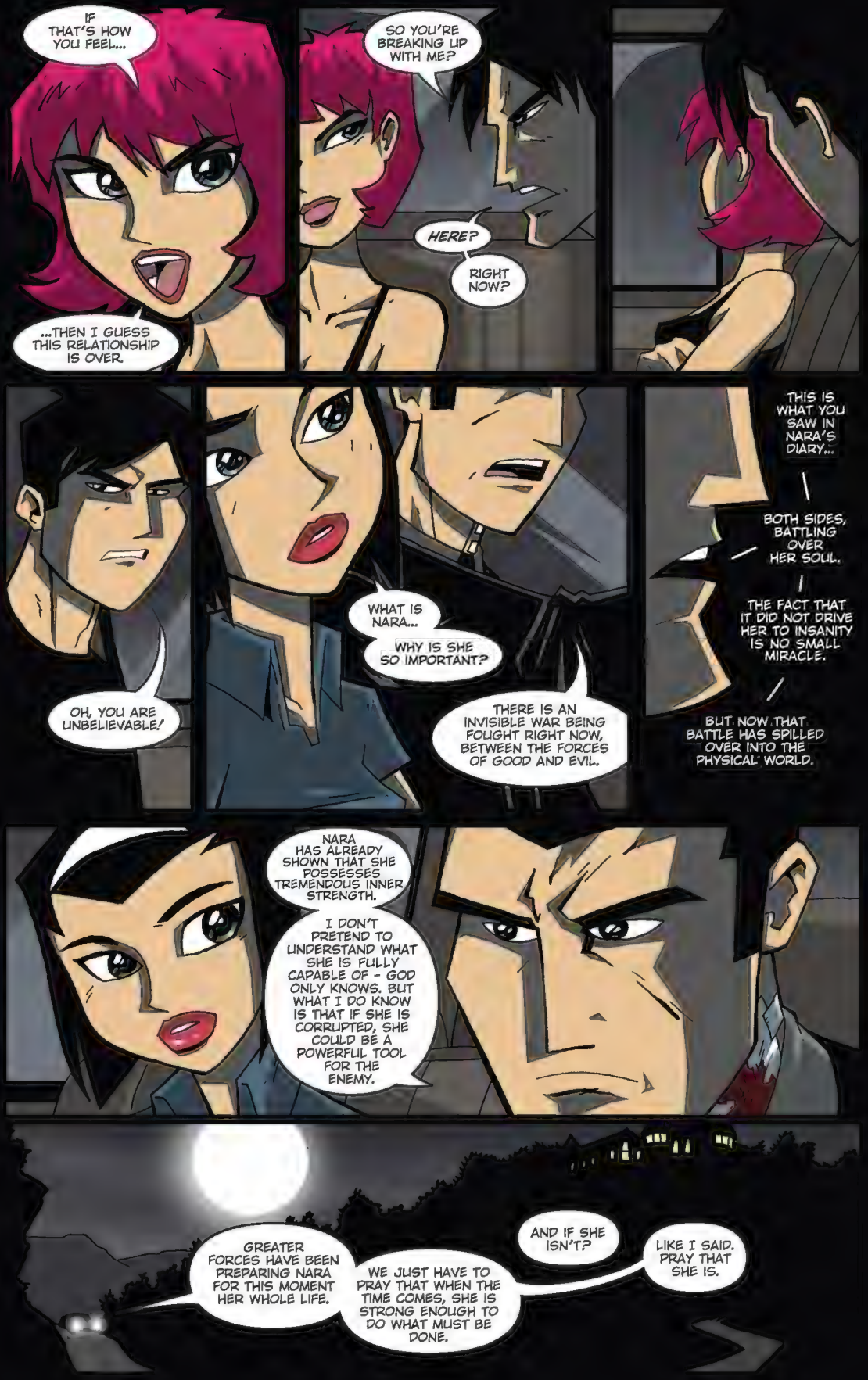
...AN UNEXPECTED DEVELOPMENT..
...BUT CERTAINLY A WELCOME ONE.
AMAZING...
LEGION RETURNS.
GOOD WORK, LEGION.
WHAT ABOUT RADDEMER?
DEAD.

TOO BAD.
I HAD HOPED TO SEE HIM ONE LAST TIME.
AND NOW. NARA KILDAY.
FINALLY, AFTER ALL THIS TIME...
IT HAS TAKEN US NEARLY SEVENTEEN YEARS...
BUT HERE YOU ARE.
ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF.
I AM HANS DARGO.
I BELIEVE YOU KNOW MY ASSOCIATE, SIMON FOSS.
SIMON!
SIMON'S JUST A LITTLE SHY RIGHT NOW.
SO YOU'RE THE ONE WHO HAD ME KILLED?
BURN IN HELL.
THANKS TO YOU, THAT'S NEVER GOING TO HAPPEN.
WE ARE GOING TO END GOD'S TYRANNY AGAINST THE UNIVERSE.
I AM GOING TO HELP YOU UNLEASH YOUR FULL POTENTIAL..
I DON'T KNOW WHAT EXACTLY RADDEMER TOLD YOU, BUT YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT HIS INTEREST IN YOU IS DRIVEN PURELY BY SELFISH REASONS.
I'LL DIE BEFORE I EVER HELP YOU.
THAT'S THE BEAUTY OF IT.
YOU CAN'T DIE NOW.
ONCE YOU WERE KILLED, YOUR TRUE NATURE WAS REVEALED. YOU NOW INHABIT A RESURRECTED BODY, A BODY THAT TRANSCENDS THE LAWS OF NATURE.
IN TIME, YOU WILL LEARN TO USE YOUR GIFTS.
JUST TO LOOK UPON YOU AS AN INFANT, ONE WOULD NEVER KNOW WHAT POWER LIED WITHIN YOU.
BUT THE PROTECTORATE KNEW.
YOU MEAN BEFORE YOU BETRAYED THEM?

YES, I WAS AN AGENT FOR PROTECTORATE IN THOSE DAYS...
...SO YOUNG, AND SO NAIVE.
A CHILD WAS BORN TO A FELLOW AGENT AND FRIEND OF MINE.
IT WAS LEARNED...
...FROM LET'S SAY...
...A HIGHER SOURCE...
...THAT THE CHILD...THAT YOU, WOULD BE 'UNIQUE.'
THE PROTECTORATE WAS SPLIT OVER WHAT YOUR ARRIVAL MEANT.
SOME MEMBERS OF THE PROTECTORATE, LED BY A MAN NAMED ABRAHAM PITCH, BELIEVED THAT YOU WERE A GIFT FROM ABOVE...
...THAT YOU COULD BE USED AS A WEAPON AGAINST OUR ENEMIES.
OTHERS WERE AFRAID OF YOUR POTENTIAL.
PITCH, WHO HAD ALREADY BEGAN GROWING WEARY OF THE PROTECTORATE'S IDEALS AND METHODS...
THREATENED TO TAKE HIS FOLLOWERS AND LEAVE THE GROUP.
THEN THE UNEXPECTED HAPPENED.
YOUR MOTHER, WHO REFUSED TO ALLOW YOU TO BE A PAWN IN A SPIRITUAL WAR, TOOK YOU AND VANISHED.
YOUR FATHER CLAIMED TO HAVE NO PART IN IT...
...AND SWORE HE KNEW NOTHING OF YOUR WHEREABOUTS.

SMELLING A CONSPIRACY, THIS WAS THE LAST STRAW FOR ABRAHAM PITCH.
HE AND HIS FOLLOWERS, OF WHICH I WAS AMONG, LEFT TO PURSUE THEIR OWN GOALS, AND BEGAN SEARCHING FOR YOU.
EVENTUALLY, WE LEARNED THAT YOUR MOTHER HAD GIVEN YOU UP FOR ADOPTION IN AN ATTEMPT TO HIDE YOU, AND WE TRACED YOU HERE, TO DARLINGTON HILLS.
I *WON'T* BE A PART OF YOUR PLAN, OR ANYONE ELSE'S.
SO WHAT? EVEN IF THAT'S ALL TRUE IT DOESN'T CHANGE ANYTHING.
IT WAS WHEN WE ARRIVED HERE THAT MR. PITCH'S VISION BEGAN TO COME INTO FOCUS, A VISION OF A NEW ORDER; FREEDOM FROM THE OPPRESSION OF THE AGENTS OF GOD.
MR. PITCH HAS FORMED AN ALLIANCE WITH A GREAT LEADER IN THE REBELLION AGAINST HEAVEN.
YOU ARE THE KEY TO THAT ALLIANCE.
I THINK I'VE HEARD ENOUGH.
OH, BUT THAT'S NOT ALL. IT GETS BETTER.
YOU REMEMBER THIS, DON'T YOU?
HOW DID YOU GET THAT?
FUNNY YOU SHOULD ASK.
MAYBE YOU SHOULD RE-EXAMINE WHO YOU CALL YOUR FRIENDS.
I WAS QUITE SURPRISED BY ITS CONTENTS. TO DECIPHER THE SPEECH OF ANGELS IS NO SMALL FEAT.
MEN GREAT AND SMALL HAVE TRIED FOR MILLENNIA, TO NO AVAIL.
WITH THIS, ONE COULD BRING DOWN FIRE FROM HEAVEN, OR SUMMON A PLAGUE.
HOW DID YOU DO IT?
LOOK, I'VE *REALLY* GOT NOTHING ELSE TO SAY TO YOU. SO GET ON WITH YOUR MASTER PLAN, OR LET ME GO.
I CANNOT ALLOW THAT.
BUT YOU NEED NOT WORRY. MR. PITCH IS READY TO REVEAL HIS PLAN FOR YOU.
YOUR DESTINY AWAITS.

WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO WHEN WE GET THERE?
JUST WALK IN AND SAY HI?
WE SHOULD EXPECT THE WORST.
YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE USING A GUN?
NO, BUT I'LL DO WHATEVER I HAVE TO TO GET NARA BACK.
WHY WON'T YOU SPEAK TO ME?
REALLY? YOU WANT TO KNOW WHY?
THIS HAS BEEN THE WORST NIGHT OF MY LIFE.
INSTEAD OF LOOKING AFTER MY INTERESTS, MY SAFETY, YOU CONTINUE TO PUT ME IN HARM'S WAY.
ALL I WANT IS TO GO HOME.
IT'S NOT MY CALL.
AND IT MAY NOT BE SAFE THERE.
OH, AND RUNNING AROUND WITH A STRANGE MAN PRETENDING TO BE IN THE FBI...
...SHOOTING GUNS AT MONSTERS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, THIS IS YOUR IDEA OF SAFE?
WHAT ABOUT NARA?
ARE WE JUST SUPPOSED TO LET THEM TAKE HER AND DO GOD KNOWS WHAT TO HER?
THAT'S WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT ISN'T IT?
YOU'RE STILL IN LOVE WITH HER.
THAT'S NOT TRUE.
I WOULD DO THE SAME FOR YOU, OR HAZY, OR WHOEVER.
I KNEW YOU WEREN'T OVER HER.
JUST STOP, OKAY!
LIKE THE SITUATION ISN'T BAD ENOUGH ALREADY WITHOUT YOU ADDING TO IT.


IF THAT'S HOW YOU FEEL...
...THEN I GUESS THIS RELATIONSHIP IS OVER.
SO YOU'RE BREAKING UP WITH ME?
HERE?
RIGHT NOW?
OH, YOU ARE UNBELIEVABLE!
WHAT IS NARA...
WHY IS SHE SO IMPORTANT?
THERE IS AN INVISIBLE WAR BEING FOUGHT RIGHT NOW, BETWEEN THE FORCES OF GOOD AND EVIL.
THIS IS WHAT YOU SAW IN NARA'S DIARY...
BOTH SIDES, BATTLING OVER HER SOUL.
THE FACT THAT IT DID NOT DRIVE HER TO INSANITY IS NO SMALL MIRACLE.
BUT NOW THAT BATTLE HAS SPILLED OVER INTO THE PHYSICAL WORLD.
NARA HAS ALREADY SHOWN THAT SHE POSSESSES TREMENDOUS INNER STRENGTH.
I DON'T PRETEND TO UNDERSTAND WHAT SHE IS FULLY CAPABLE OF - GOD ONLY KNOWS. BUT WHAT I DO KNOW IS THAT IF SHE IS CORRUPTED, SHE COULD BE A POWERFUL TOOL FOR THE ENEMY.
GREATER FORCES HAVE BEEN PREPARING NARA FOR THIS MOMENT HER WHOLE LIFE.
WE JUST HAVE TO PRAY THAT WHEN THE TIME COMES, SHE IS STRONG ENOUGH TO DO WHAT MUST BE DONE.
AND IF SHE ISN'T?
LIKE I SAID. PRAY THAT SHE IS.

GOD, IF YOU'RE OUT THERE...
...IF YOU'RE LISTENING...
I COULD REALLY USE A HAND RIGHT NOW.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND ANY OF THIS...
...OR ANY OF THE THINGS THAT HAVE HAPPENED TO ME OVER THE PAST YEAR.
THE DREAMS.
THE VISIONS.
THE VOICES.
I KNOW THESE MEN ARE EVIL AND THEY HAVE TO BE STOPPED...
...BUT WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO WITH ANY OF IT?
WHY ME?
I KNOW I'M STILL ALIVE FOR A REASON, I JUST WISH YOU WOULD JUST TELL ME WHAT IT IS I'M SUPPOSED TO DO.
DO I EVEN HAVE A CHOICE?
CRE-E-AK

SIMON?
MR. DARGO WOULD LIKE TO KNOW IF YOU NEED ANYTHING BEFORE WE BEGIN THE CEREMONY.
HOW CONSIDERATE OF HIM.
HE REALLY IS A GENEROUS MAN.
SIMON, HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED IN THIS?
I'VE KNOWN YOU FOR AS LONG AS I'VE KNOWN HAZY.
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN AMAZED AT HOW BRIGHT YOU ARE.
I BELIEVED YOU COULD ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING YOU WANTED IN LIFE.
...BUT THIS, SIMON...
...THIS IS INSANITY.
YOU KNOW WHAT IT WAS LIKE FOR ME GROWING UP.
NO ONE HAS EVER BELIEVED IN ME LIKE HE HAS.
MR. DARGO OFFERED TO HELP ME REACH MY FULL POTENTIAL.
SURELY YOU CAN SEE HIM FOR WHAT HE IS!
HE'S MANIPULATED YOU....HE'S PURE EVIL
YOU ARE BETTER THAN THIS!
I'M SORRY, NARA.
IT'S TOO LATE FOR ME.
NO, IT'S NOT!
LET ME OUT OF THESE CHAINS AND WE CAN GET OUT OF HERE!
NO! YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND!
SIMON, I KNOW, OKAY?
I KNOW...
I KNOW IT WAS YOU.
I KNOW YOU'RE THE ONE WHO....
THE ONE WHO KILLED ME.
BUT YOU CAN DO THE RIGHT THING NOW AND LET ME GO.
MAKE THINGS RIGHT, SIMON.
I'M SORRY.

FRIENDS...
COLLEAGUES...
FELLOW CONSPIRATORS!
THE MOMENT OF OUR SALVATION IS AT HAND!
BEHOLD YOUR SAVIOR!

CHAPTER 4

THERE IS NO NEED FOR FEAR.
IN FACT, WHAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO PARTAKE IN IS A GREAT PRIVILEGE...
...THE RISE OF THE NEW MAN.
AND THE KEY TO IT ALL IS YOU...
...THE INCUBATOR.
ABRAHAM PITCH WAS...
... IS A MAN OF GREAT VISION.
HE DISCOVERED A WAY TO FREE HIMSELF FROM THE LIMITATIONS OF HIS FRAGILE HUMAN SHELL. HIS BRAIN WAS ABLE TO REACH ITS FULL POTENTIAL, NO LONGER RESTRICTED TO MAINTAINING THE FUNCTIONS OF THE BODY.
HIS MIND WAS ABLE TO ENTER, SHALL WE SAY, A HIGHER STATE OF CONSCIOUSNESS.
IT WAS THERE THAT HE ABLE TO MAKE CONTACT WITH THE ANCIENT AND POWERFUL ENTITY KNOWN AS BOLABOGG.
PITCH AND BOLABOGG, BOTH REALIZING THAT THEY SHARED A COMMON GOAL, STRUCK A DEAL.
BOLABOGG WOULD USE THE ENHANCED MIND OF PITCH AS A PORTAL TO ENTER OUR WORLD AND JOIN US IN OUR QUEST TO RESHAPE THE EARTH IN OUR IMAGE.
IN RETURN, WE WOULD PROVIDE HIM WITH A HOST BODY, ONE STRONG ENOUGH TO CONTAIN HIS AWESOME MIGHT. THIS BODY WOULD ACT AS AN INCUBATOR, A SORT OF HOLDING TANK UNTIL IT WAS READY TO GIVE BIRTH TO HIS NEW INCARNATE FORM, THE PERFECT AMALGAMATION OF FLESH AND SPIRIT.
THAT IS WHERE YOU COME IN.
NARA THE RESURRECTED...
NARA THE HOPE OF HEAVEN...
...THIS IS YOUR TRUE PURPOSE.
IF ONLY YOUR PARENTS COULD SEE THEIR LITTLE PRIZE NOW.

IT REALLY TOOK SOME CONVINCING TO GET POOR SIMON TO KILL YOU.
CAN'T SAY THAT I BLAME HIM.
YOU ARE QUITE BEAUTIFUL...
AHHHH!!!
BEGIN THE CEREMONY!
MEANWHILE...
THIS IS IT.
WELL, WHAT DO WE DO?
WE...
KA-THUNK!
RRRAARRHHHH

CRRRASHH!!
YOU SHOULD NOT HAVE COME
BLAM!
PUT HIM DOWN!
SMACK!
LISA, GET OUT!
RUN!
{GACK}

RADDEMER!
GOOD TO SEE YOU, TOO.
BUT DON'T YOU THINK YOU'VE TAKEN THE WHOLE "SATANIC-CULT-SACRIFICING-A-TEENAGE-VIRGIN-TO-A-DEMON-OVERLORD" CLICHE A BIT TOO FAR?
HAZY!
ARE YOU OKAY?
SIMON...
...WHAT'S GOING ON?
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?
DARGO!
YOU PROMISED TO LEAVE MY FAMILY OUT OF THIS!
AND SECURE MY PLACE IN HELL...
NO THANKS.
YOU'RE IN WAY OVER YOUR HEAD, DARGO.
THIS IS NOT GOING TO END WELL, I PROMISE YOU.
WE WILL SEE.
DARGO! YOU HAVE TO ANSWER FOR THIS!
YOU SHOULD HAVE JOINED US WHEN YOU HAD THE CHANCE, RADDEMER.
YOU COULD'VE BEEN A PART OF THIS.
TREAD CAREFULLY, SIMON. YOU'RE ON DANGEROUS GROUND.

NARA.... YOU OKAY?
YEAH... STILL HANGING IN THERE.
BEGIN!
WE ARE HUMBLED BY YOUR AWESOME MIGHT!
YOU ARE WELCOME HERE, OH UNHOLY ONE.
YOUR VESSEL AWAITS!
KLANG
BLAM!
WHAT?!!

HANS DARGO!
YOU ARE SURROUNDED!
RELEASE YOUR PRISONERS AND SURRENDER YOURSELF TO THE PROTECTORATE!
ABOUT TIME...
LEGION!!
AAAAAHHH!!
BLAM!

BLAM!
HOLD THEM BACK!
BLAM!
NOW, LORD BOLABOGG!
COME FORTH!

NARA!
GET OUT OF THE WAY!
AAAAAAAAAHHHHHH!!!
NARA!
CAN YOU HEAR ME?
SMACK!

...WHAT...?
NARA...
YOU!
AGAIN?!
I HAVE COME...
...TO CLAIM WHAT IS MINE.
AFTER ALL THE VISIONS...
...THE NIGHTMARES...
...THE TORMENT...
...DIDN'T YOU GET THE HINT? YOU WON'T BREAK ME!
YES...
YOU PUT UP QUITE THE STRUGGLE.
...BUT YOU CANNOT RESIST ME ANY LONGER.
HE CANNOT INTERFERE NOW.
MY POWER IS COURSING THROUGH YOUR VEINS, INTOXICATING YOU.
EVEN NOW YOU ARE SUCCUMBING TO MY WILL. YOU KNOW THAT THIS IS AS IT SHOULD BE...
NO...!

SHUCK
BLAM!
SMACK
GET UP!
TOO MANY TIMES HAVE YOU STOOD IN OUR WAY.
I WILL TAKE GREAT PLEASURE IN BREAKING YOU.
GO FOR IT.
KA-RACK!

...HHNNNNN...
YES....
NARA!
NO, HAZY...
WE'RE GETTING OUT OF HERE!
NO!
LET GO OF ME!
GET AWAY FROM HER!
AAAHHHH!!!
HAZY!
RRRAARRRRR
KA-THUNK

WHACK
THWACK
THUD
I SEE YOU HAVEN'T LOST THE KILLER INSTINCT.
SIMON!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

THIS IS ALL YOUR FAULT!
YOU PROMISED ME SHE WOULDN'T BE HURT!
GET AHOLD OF YOURSELF!
YOU'RE DELUSIONAL!
THUK
.....SIMON?
SIMON!
..HAZY...
...I'M SORRY...
...
NO!
MEN!
GUARD THE INCUBATOR!
SHE MUST BE PROTECTED UNTIL THE PROCESS IS COMPLETE!
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
NOT WITHOUT NARA AND HAZY!
I'M GOING AFTER THEM!
NO, ELIJAH!
FORGET ABOUT THEM!
LET'S GO NOW!
LISA, WATCH OUT!!
AAAAAAAHHHHH!!
NOOOO!

HAZY...
...YOU OKAY?
COME ON, HE'S DEAD.
WE'RE GETTING OUT OF HERE.
NOT AGAIN.
SMACK
C'MON!
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?
I WILL FEAST UPON YOUR SOUL.
KA-BLAM

NICE.
C'MON.
LET'S GET NARA AND GET THE HELL OUTTA HERE.
LORD DARGO!
THE PROTECTORATE IS ON THE RUN!
THE LEGION HAS DRIVEN THEM INTO THE WOODS!
EXCELLENT!
DARGO!
LET HER GO!
I'M SORRY..
...BUT YOU'RE TOO LATE TO SAVE HER.

OBSERVE...
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO HER?
I HAVE ONLY LED HER TO HER DESTINY.
THERE IS NOTHING BUT DARKNESS.
ALL YOUR HOPES ARE EMPTY.
YOUR GOD HAS ABANDONED YOU.
YOU ARE ALONE IN A SOULLESS VOID.
EVEN DEATH HAS REJECTED YOU.
EVERYTHING YOU HAVE KNOWN IS MEANINGLESS.
WHERE ELSE IS THERE FOR YOU TO TURN?
YOU ARE BEATEN!
YIELD TO ME!
LORD DARGO!
YES! ARISE, MY LORD!
MY LORD?

AAAHHHAA!!!
NOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!
....AAAAAHHHH....
...SHE DID IT...
TAKE IT EASY.
WE'VE GOT YOU.
LORD DARGO, SIR?
ARE YOU OKAY?
I'D THINK WE'D BETTER HURRY.
AAHHHAA!

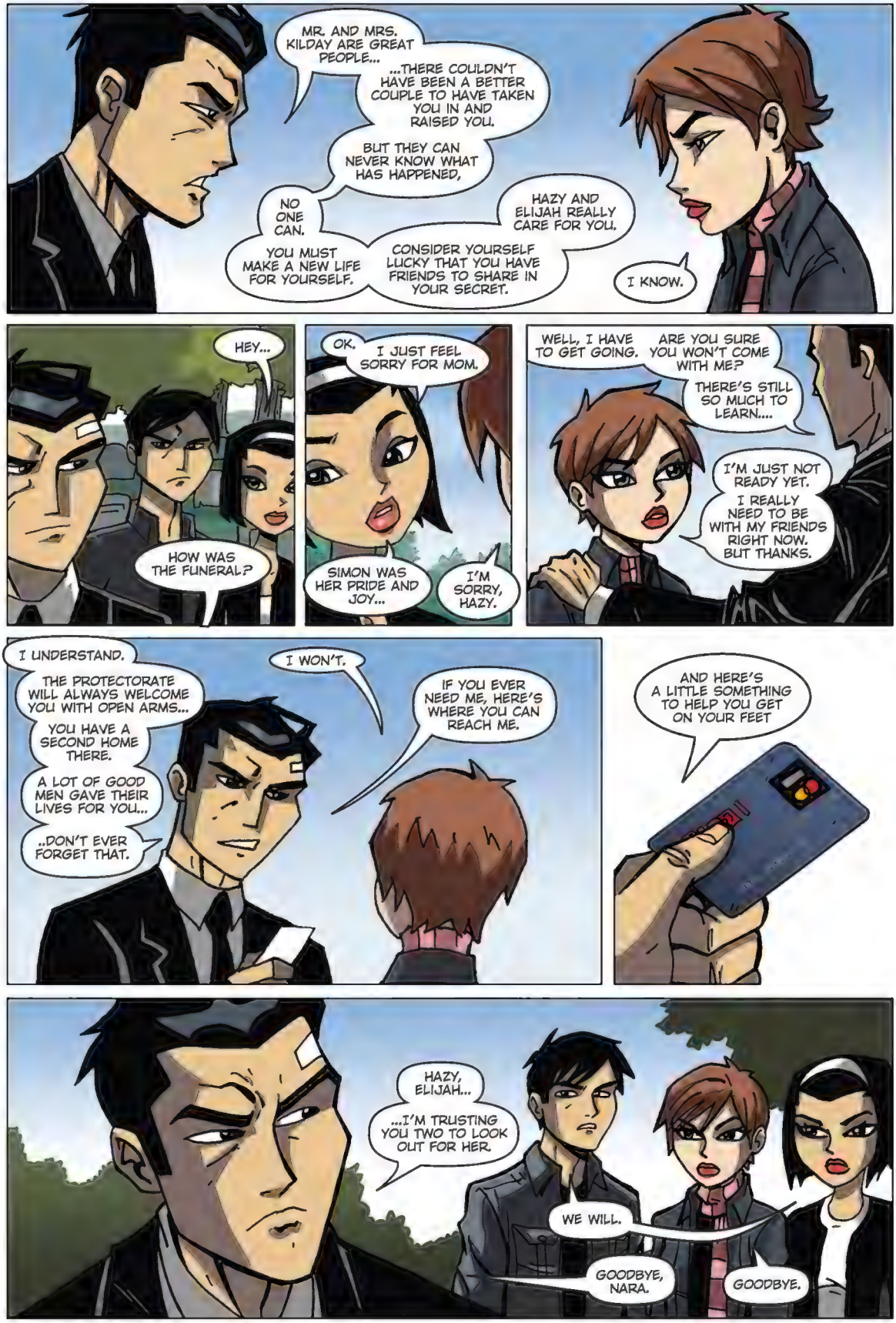
BABOOM

OH, GOD.
NOT GOOD...

DIARY
NARA!
NOEL....
RRRRAAAAAA
LISTEN!
THE ONLY WAY TO STOP THAT THING IS WITH YOUR DIARY!
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
THE LANGUAGE...
...YOU HAVE IT ALL WRITTEN HERE.
IT IS THE ONLY THING THAT HAS POWER OVER THAT BEAST!
ONLY YOU CAN DO THIS!
I...I...CAN'T!
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO READ THIS!
IT JUST CAME TO ME, AND I WROTE IT DOWN...
...I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT ALL MEANS!!
IT DOESN'T MATTER!
IT WILL ALL COME TO YOU, TRUST ME!
DO IT NOW, BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!
UMM....I....
CONCENTRATE!

AARRRRARRRRGGGGHHH!!
YOU'RE DOING IT!
SHHZZZ
SHHZZZ
SHHHZZZZZAAAK

BLAM!
I DON'T THINK I'LL EVER GET USED TO THIS.
YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO MAKE A LOT OF ADJUSTMENTS NOW...
...YOU HAVE A NEW LIFE, A NEW PURPOSE.
BUT I DON'T WANT A NEW LIFE...
..I JUST WANT TO GO BACK TO THE WAY THINGS WERE.
I DIDN'T ASK FOR THIS.
UNFORTUNATELY, NOT MANY OF US HAVE THE LUXURY OF DECIDING WHAT KIND OF HELL LIFE DECIDES TO THROW AT US.
THE CHOICE YOU HAVE IS, ARE YOU GOING TO LET IT BEAT YOU OR MAKE YOU STRONGER?
I AM TRULY SORRY FOR WHAT HAS HAPPENED, NARA.
THINGS AREN'T GOING TO BE EASY FOR YOU. NONE OF US WAS EVER PROMISED A COMFORTABLE LIFE.
BUT SOMEONE OUT THERE THINKS YOU'RE WORTHY OF THIS CALLING.
THAT IS SOMETHING YOU *CAN* TAKE COMFORT IN.
AND... FOR WHAT IT'S WORTH... *I'M* PROUD OF YOU.
THANK YOU. I JUST WISH I COULD SAY GOODBYE TO MY PARENTS ONE LAST TIME.


MR. AND MRS. KILDAY ARE GREAT PEOPLE...
...THERE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN A BETTER COUPLE TO HAVE TAKEN YOU IN AND RAISED YOU.
BUT THEY CAN NEVER KNOW WHAT HAS HAPPENED,
NO ONE CAN.
YOU MUST MAKE A NEW LIFE FOR YOURSELF.
CONSIDER YOURSELF LUCKY THAT YOU HAVE FRIENDS TO SHARE IN YOUR SECRET.
HAZY AND ELIJAH REALLY CARE FOR YOU.
I KNOW.
HEY...
HOW WAS THE FUNERAL?
OK.
I JUST FEEL SORRY FOR MOM.
SIMON WAS HER PRIDE AND JOY...
I'M SORRY, HAZY.
WELL, I HAVE TO GET GOING.
ARE YOU SURE YOU WON'T COME WITH ME?
THERE'S STILL SO MUCH TO LEARN....
I'M JUST NOT READY YET.
I REALLY NEED TO BE WITH MY FRIENDS RIGHT NOW. BUT THANKS.
I UNDERSTAND.
THE PROTECTORATE WILL ALWAYS WELCOME YOU WITH OPEN ARMS...
YOU HAVE A SECOND HOME THERE.
A LOT OF GOOD MEN GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR YOU...
..DON'T EVER FORGET THAT.
I WON'T.
IF YOU EVER NEED ME, HERE'S WHERE YOU CAN REACH ME.
AND HERE'S A LITTLE SOMETHING TO HELP YOU GET ON YOUR FEET
HAZY, ELIJAH...
...I'M TRUSTING YOU TWO TO LOOK OUT FOR HER.
WE WILL.
GOODBYE, NARA.
GOODBYE.

WELL...
...I'VE GOT TO GET GOING...
...LISA'S FUNERAL'S STARTING.
THINGS GOT REALLY UGLY BETWEEN US, BUT I FIGURE I SHOULD BE THERE, FOR HER FAMILY.
I UNDERSTAND.
ELIJAH...
THANKS FOR EVERYTHING ...I...
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
I'LL CATCH UP WITH YOU LATER, OKAY.
OKAY.
SO...
...HERE WE ARE.
YEAH...
IT'S WEIRD..
..BUT NOT MUCH HAS CHANGED.
IT'S LIKE NONE OF IT IS REAL, YOU KNOW.
...IT'S LIKE SO MUCH HAS HAPPENED...
I THINK I OWE YOU AN APOLOGY...
...FOR KEEPING THINGS FROM YOU.
I'M SORRY I NEVER TOLD YOU WHAT WAS GOING ON WITH ME.
I DIDN'T WANT IT TO CHANGE THINGS BETWEEN US.
NARA, YOU'RE MY BEST FRIEND, ALWAYS HAVE BEEN.
NOTHING YOU COULD TELL ME WOULD EVER CHANGE THAT. I'M ALWAYS HERE FOR YOU, NO MATTER WHAT.
I'M JUST SO GLAD YOU'RE BACK.....I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WOULD'VE DONE WITHOUT YOU.
THANKS, HAZY.
THAT MEANS A LOT TO ME.
RRRAARGGG!!!

RRRGG!
I THOUGHT YOU TOOK CARE OF ALL THOSE THINGS!
LOOKS LIKE I MISSED ONE.
WHAT DO YOU SAY WE TAKE THIS ONE...
...TOGETHER?

BOOK 2

blood of saints

CHAPTER 1
DARLINGTON HILLS...

PLEASE...
PLEASE....
LEAVE ME ALONE...
I CAN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE!
SURRENDER YOURSELF... END YOUR MISERY.
STOP...
STOP!

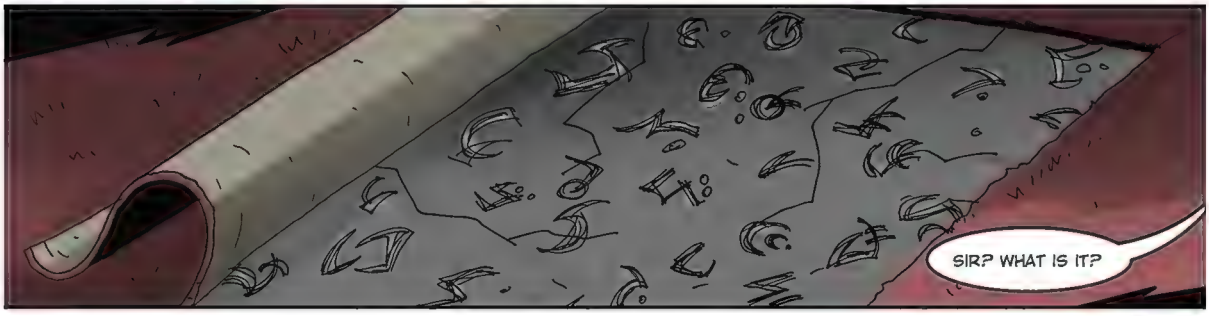
...VIOLET GREY, AGE 19.

WHO DISCOVERED THE BODY?
THE MOTHER.
WHAT HAVE YOU FOUND OUT?
ANYTHING?
SHE SAID THE GIRL HAD BECOME WITHDRAWN...
...ANTISOCIAL...

...BUT COULDN'T POINT TO ANYTHING IN PARTICULAR THAT WOULD DRIVE HER TO DO THIS.
DETECTIVE!
COME TAKE A LOOK AT THIS!

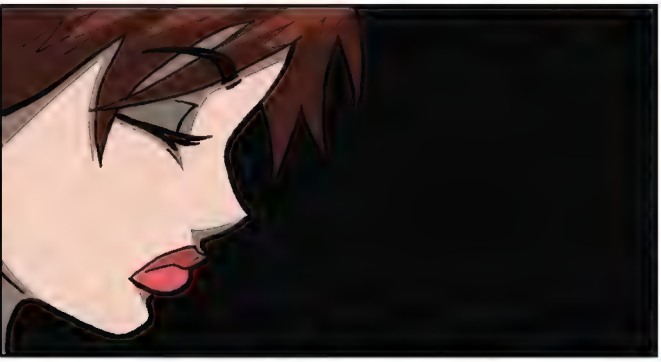
I WAS LOOKING AROUND WHEN I NEARLY TRIPPED AND BROKE MY NECK...
NOTICED THE CARPET HERE WAS COMING LOOSE.
I TOOK A CLOSER LOOK AND THIS...

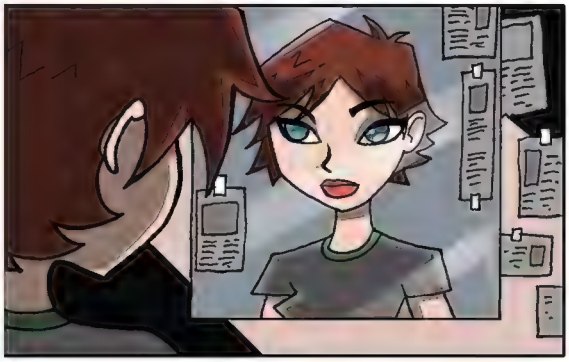
...THIS IS WHAT I FOUND.

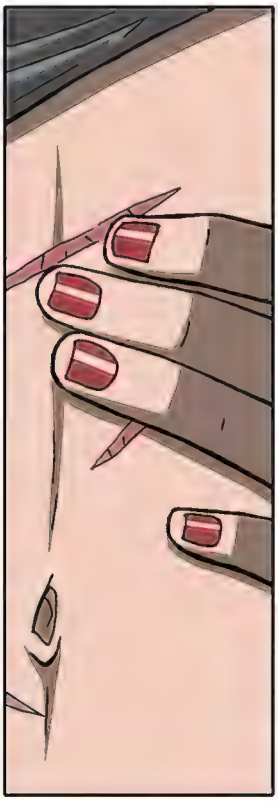

SIR? WHAT IS IT?

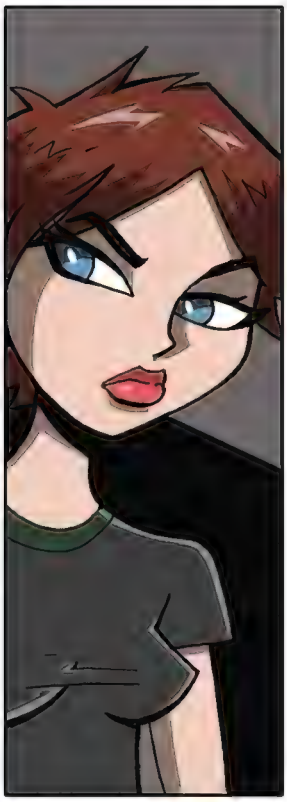
EAT
B
WAKE UP, SLEEPY HEAD!
WHAT?
DON'T YOU THINK IT'S TIME YOU GOT UP?
I JUST GOT TO SLEEP 10 MINUTES AGO.
NARA...
...AGAIN?
YOU'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THIS.
I JUST CAN'T SLEEP...
..I JUST DON'T GET THAT TIRED ANYMORE.
WELL, LET'S SEE...
EVER SINCE YOU'VE RETURNED FROM THE DEAD, YOU'VE HAD PERFECT SKIN, YOU DON'T GAIN WEIGHT, YOU DON'T GET SICK...
...AM I FORGETTING ANYTHING? AND NOW YOU DON'T NEED SLEEP.
WHAT'S NEXT? WALKING ON WATER?
WELL, I *WAS* HOPING WE COULD HIT THE LAKE TODAY...

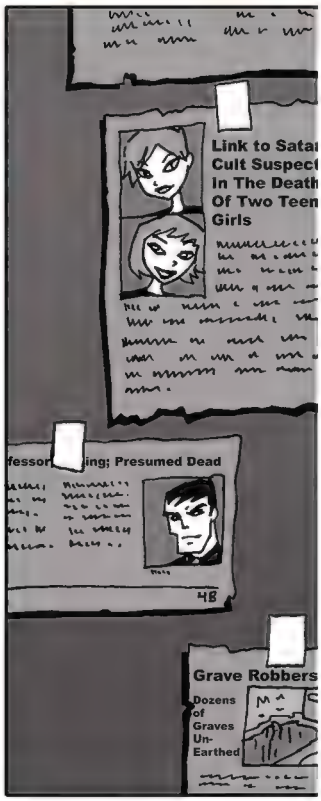
SORRY, US NORMAL PEOPLE HAVE TO GET TO WORK...
...SO I'LL BE IN THE SHOWER.
WHAT DO YOU HAVE PLANNED *AFTER* WORK?
I FIGURED WE COULD RENT A COUPLE OF MOVIES, OR--
ACTUALLY, I PROMISED SOME FRIENDS FROM WORK THAT I'D HANG OUT WITH THEM TONIGHT...
I'M SORRY, NARA. WE'VE KINDA HAD IT PLANNED FOR A WHILE.
OH... THAT'S OKAY.
WELL, HAVE FUN.
SEE YOU WHEN YOU GET HOME.










Link to Satan Cult Suspect In The Death Of Two Teen Girls
Grave Robbers
Dozens of Graves Un-Earthed

27 CENTS?
SUGAR
HOW GENEROUS.
HAZY!
YOU'VE GOT 2 TABLES THAT STILL HAVEN'T GOTTEN THEIR DRINKS...
PICK IT UP!!
RIGHT ON IT...
...DON'T WANT TO MISS OUT ON ANOTHER 27 CENTS...
...I COULD HAVE A WHOLE DOLLAR BY THE END OF THE DAY!
CAN THE ATTITUDE AND DO YOUR JOB.
JERK.
HEY, HAZY...
NARA, YOU SCARED ME.
I DON'T THINK I'LL EVER GET USED TO SEEING YOU IN THAT DISGUISE.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I WAS JUST STOPPING BY TO SAY HI.
I WAS BORED...
WELL, NOW IS NOT A GOOD TIME.
WHY NOT?
BECAUSE... YOUR PARENTS ARE HERE.

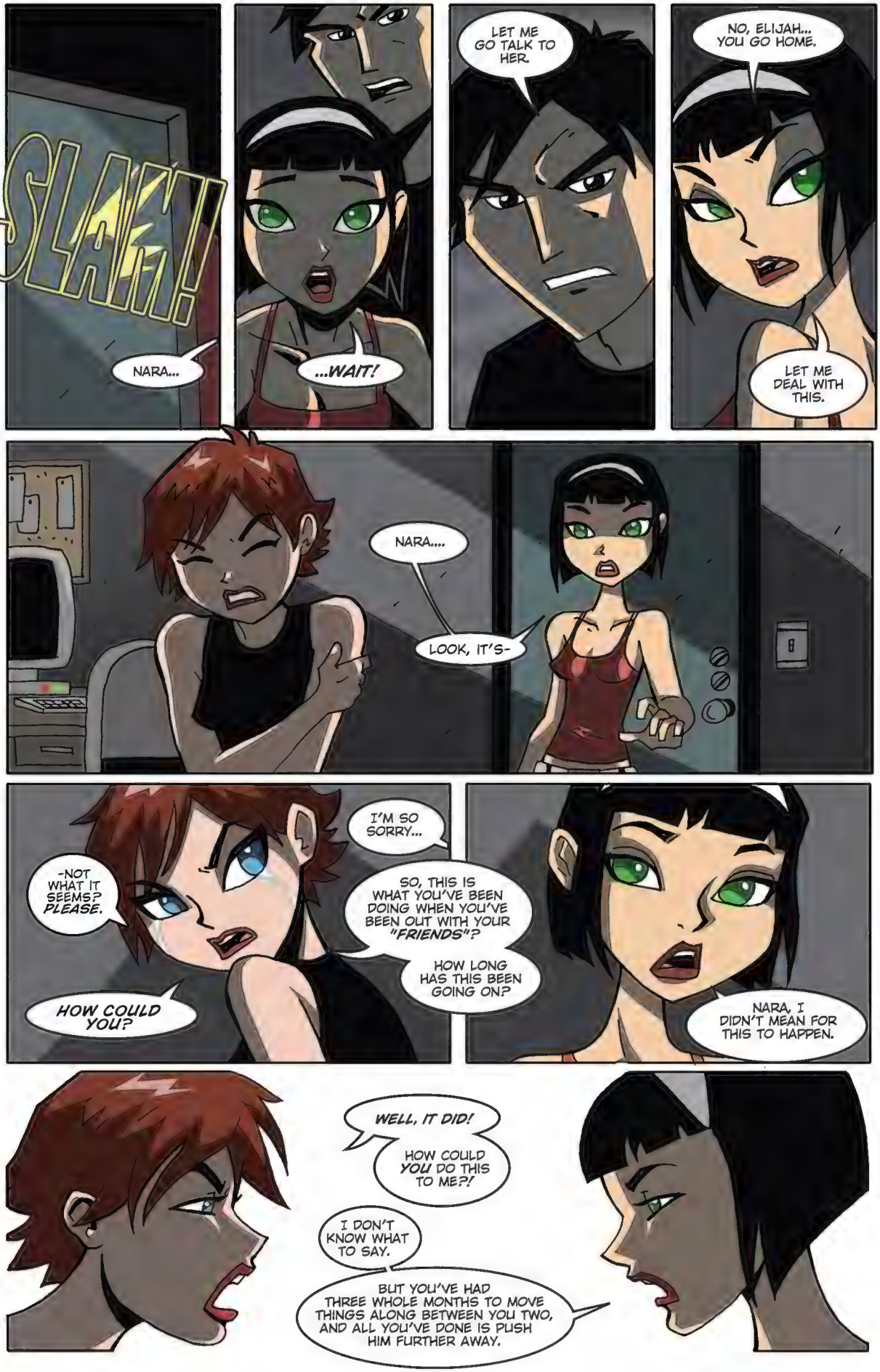
OH, MY GOSH...
YOU SHOULD PROBABLY GO...
YOU DON'T WANT THEM TO SEE YOU.
BUT I WANT TO SEE THEM.
YOU CAN'T!
I'LL PLAY IT COOL...
...THEY WON'T RECOGNIZE ME.
JUST LET ME WALK OVER THERE WITH YOU.
THIS ISN'T A GOOD IDEA.
EVERYTHING ALRIGHT OVER HERE, YOU TWO?
OH, YES OF COURSE, DEAR.
THANK YOU.
HOW'S SCHOOL GOING?
ABOUT READY TO GRADUATE?
WELL, EVER SINCE MOM WENT INTO REHAB, I'VE KINDA BEEN ON MY OWN.
I HAD TO DROP OUT AND GET MY G.E.D.
SO I'M JUST WORKING FULL TIME AND TAKING NIGHT CLASSES AT DHU.
WELL, I'M SORRY ABOUT YOUR MOTHER...
I WISH HER THE BEST, BUT I'M GLAD YOU'VE GOT YOUR HEAD ON STRAIGHT AND ARE TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF.
WHO'S YOUR FRIEND THERE?
UMM...
UMM...HI...
I'M...UH... CHARLOTTE - HAZY'S ROOM-MATE.

OH, NICE TO MEET YOU.
I WAS SORRY TO HEAR ABOUT NARA.
OH...
DID YOU KNOW HER?
...NO, BUT I KNEW OF HER.
SHE SEEMED LIKE A REALLY NICE PERSON.
SHE WAS...
I'M SURE SHE WOULD'VE LIKED YOU...
...SHE GOT ALONG WITH MOST EVERYONE...
WELL, I'LL LEAVE YOU TWO TO FINISH YOUR LUNCH.
IF YOU NEED ANYTHING, JUST YELL.
WE'LL DO, SWEETIE. AND YOU DO THE SAME.
THAT WAS EXTREMELY UNCOMFORTABLE.
WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?
I'M SORRY, HAZY...
...IT'S JUST BEEN SO LONG.
I MISS THEM SO MUCH.
I JUST HAD TO SEE THEM...TO SEE IF THEY WERE OKAY.
I'LL SEE YA.

POLICE HQ...
A 17 YEAR OLD GIRL IS MURDERED.
A DIARY IS FOUND, HINTING AT OCCULTIC ACTIVITY - STRANGE SYMBOLS, CRYPTIC WRITINGS.
DAYS LATER AN ANONYMOUS TIP LEADS TO THE DISCOVERY OF THE AFTERMATH OF SOME SORT OF BIZARRE...
...ELABORATE SATANIC RITUAL...
...DOZENS DEAD.
ON TOP OF THAT, NEARLY A HUNDRED GRAVES ARE DISCOVERED TO BE UNEARTHED...
...BODIES SCATTERED ALL OVER TOWN...
...LEAVING SOME PEOPLE TO BELIEVE THAT THE DEAD HAD RISEN AND WERE WALKING THE EARTH.
ALL GOES QUIET FOR NEARLY THREE MONTHS...
...UNTIL NOW.
ANOTHER DEAD TEENAGER, THIS TIME APPARENT SUICIDE, AND THE SAME OCCULTIC SYMBOLS ARE DISCOVERED AT THE CRIME SCENE.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IN GOD'S NAME IS GOING ON IN THIS TOWN...
...BUT WE NEED ANSWERS *QUICK* - BEFORE THIS CASE GETS HANDED OFF TO THE FBI.
WHAT DO YOU HAVE IN MIND?
WE'VE GONE OVER THIS..
...TACKLED EVERY ANGLE, EXAMINED EVERY CLUE, AND COME UP WITH JACK.
FEELS LIKE WE'RE THE BUTT OF SOMEONE'S SICK JOKE.
I THINK WE NEED TO GO BACK TO THE BEGINNING.
SIR?
C'MON, ELIJAH...ANSWER THE PHONE.
HEY, THIS IS ELIJAH...
I'M NOT HERE, SO LEAVE A MESSAGE.
ACE
THAT'S OKAY. I WAS LOOING FORWARD TO BEING STUCK AT HOME ALL ALONE. *AGAIN.*

...NO...
KA-THUD

WHAT?
OH, GOD! NARA, I'M -


SLAM!
NARA...
...WAIT!
LET ME GO TALK TO HER.
NO, ELIJAH... YOU GO HOME.
LET ME DEAL WITH THIS.
NARA....
LOOK, IT'S-
I'M SO SORRY...
-NOT WHAT IT SEEMS? PLEASE.
SO, THIS IS WHAT YOU'VE BEEN DOING WHEN YOU'VE BEEN OUT WITH YOUR "FRIENDS"?
HOW LONG HAS THIS BEEN GOING ON?
HOW COULD YOU?
NARA, I DIDN'T MEAN FOR THIS TO HAPPEN.
WELL, IT DID!
HOW COULD YOU DO THIS TO ME?!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.
BUT YOU'VE HAD THREE WHOLE MONTHS TO MOVE THINGS ALONG BETWEEN YOU TWO, AND ALL YOU'VE DONE IS PUSH HIM FURTHER AWAY.

WELL, I'M SORRY, HAZY!
I'VE KINDA BEEN THROUGH A LOT THESE PAST FEW MONTHS... YOU KNOW, THE WHOLE DYING THING!!
YOU THINK YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE THAT'S SUFFERED?
I'VE LOST EVERTHING!
MY BROTHER'S DEAD, MY MOM'S AN ADDICT, I'M A DROP OUT, AND I'VE HAD TO LIE TO THE POLICE AND JUST ABOUT EVERYONE I KNOW JUST TO PROTECT YOUR LITTLE SECRET!
ELIJAH IS THE ONLY ONE I'VE HAD TO TALK TO ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT'S HAPPENED...
...AND I'M ALL HE'S HAD, TOO.
WELL, IT'S NICE TO KNOW THAT WHILE I'VE BEEN STUCK IN THIS APARTMENT NIGHT AFTER NIGHT, ISOLATED FROM THE WORLD...
YOU TWO'VE BEEN OUT HAVING A GOOD TIME!
HOW LONG WERE YOU GOING TO KEEP THIS FROM ME?
I WASN'T KEEPING IT FROM YOU...
I JUST LET MYSELF GET CARRIED AWAY...
HOW SERIOUS IS IT?
DO YOU LOVE HIM?
NARA.. PLEASE...
I HAVE TO KNOW.
...I...
I DON'T KNOW...
NARA, WAIT!
DON'T LEAVE!
SLAM!

UH...
...CAN I HELP YOU?
NAKA KILDAY?
YES...
RUURRHH!!
RUURRHH!!
RUURRHH!!!
THIS IS THE LAST THING I NEED RIGHT NOW.

SMACK!
HAAAZZZ
GAAAK!
HUH?

COUGH
COUGH
AAAK!
ALLOW ME.
FORGIVE MY HESITATION...
IT'S A LITTLE HARD TO KNOW FRIENDS FROM ENEMIES ANYMORE.
UNDERSTANDABLE.
WHAT WERE THEY?
SERVANTS OF BOLABOGG...
...MEN, INFECTED BY PURE EVIL, SEEKING TO DEVOUR HUMAN SOULS.
MY NAME IS MALACHI.
WE'VE MET BEFORE, THOUGH YOU MAY NOT REMEMBER.
YOU...
...YOU WERE THERE...
I REMEMBER NOW.
WHO ARE YOU?
I AM... A SERVANT.
I'VE COME TO TELL YOU TO STAY TRUE TO YOUR PATH. YOU ARE AT A CRUCIAL POINT IN YOUR JOURNEY.
BOLABOGG *LIVES.*
HIS EVIL IS SPREADING LIKE A VIRUS.
HE WILL USE WHATEVER... AND WHOEVER...HE CAN TO TURN YOUR ATTENTION AND ENERGIES ELSEWHERE.
HE CANNOT SUCCEED IF YOU ARE ABLE TO REACH YOUR FULL POTENTIAL. THAT IS WHY YOU MUST NOT LOSE SIGHT OF YOUR MISSION.
WHICH IS *WHAT* EXACTLY?
BEING A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS, STANDING STRONG IN THE FACE OF EVIL. BEYOND THAT, I AM NOT PERMITTED TO SAY. BUT ALL WILL BE MADE KNOWN. *IN TIME.*

YOU MUST REMAIN STRONG.
THE SALVATION OF MAN HAS OFTEN LIED IN THE SACRIFICE OF THE RIGHTEOUS...
AND BEEN BOUGHT BY THE BLOOD OF SAINTS.
YOU KNOW WHAT YOU MUST DO.
I REALLY DON'T. LOOK, I THINK MAYBE YOU GUYS PICKED THE WRONG GIRL.
I'M NOT SURE IF-
HEY!
WAIT!
RADDEMER
477-8
C'MON...
WE'RE SORRY...
THE NUMBER YOU HAVE REACHED IS NO LONGER IN SERVICE.
PLEASE HANG UP, AND-
GREAT.

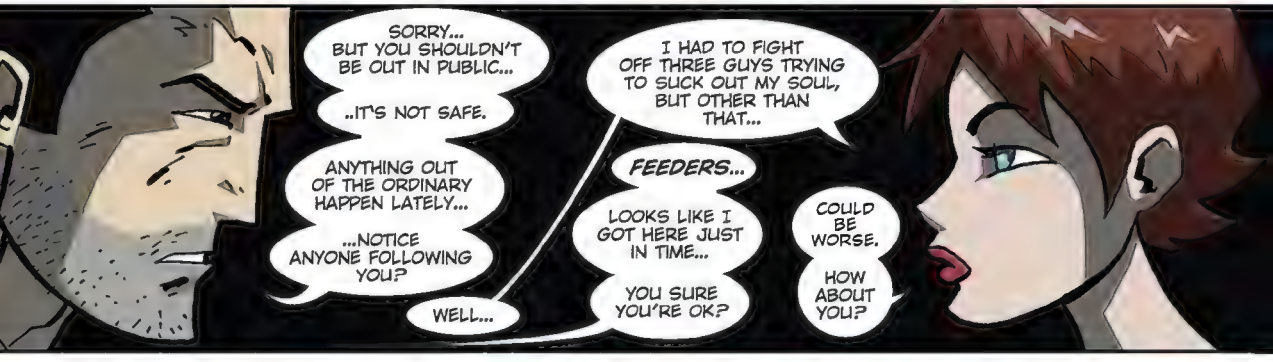
GASP

CHAPTER 2
phone

LET GO OF ME!

NOEL!
WHERE'VE YOU BEEN?
I HAVEN'T HEARD FROM YOU IN MONTHS!

ARE YOU OKAY?
YEAH...
...BUT DID YOU HAVE TO GRAB ME LIKE THAT?
GEEZ...


SORRY... BUT YOU SHOULDN'T BE OUT IN PUBLIC...
..IT'S NOT SAFE.
ANYTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY HAPPEN LATELY...
...NOTICE ANYONE FOLLOWING YOU?
WELL...
I HAD TO FIGHT OFF THREE GUYS TRYING TO SUCK OUT MY SOUL, BUT OTHER THAN THAT...
FEEDERS...
LOOKS LIKE I GOT HERE JUST IN TIME...
YOU SURE YOU'RE OK?
COULD BE WORSE.
HOW ABOUT YOU?

LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH HELL.
I'VE BEEN BETTER...

WE SHOULD GO.
GO?
WHERE?

LEAVE DARLINGTON HILLS.
LEAVE? I CAN'T JUST UP AND GO.
I'M NOT GIVING YOU A CHOICE.

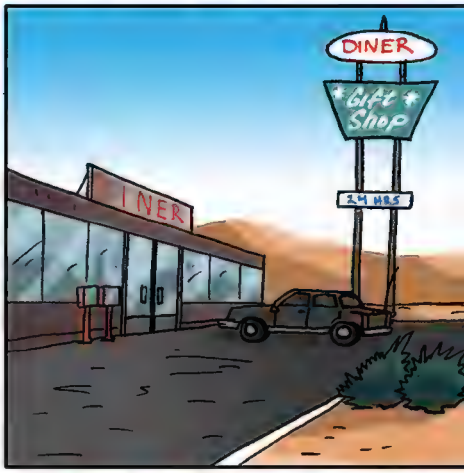
knock knock knock
HEY.
HEY.
YOU OKAY?
CAN I COME IN?
NARA DIDN'T COME HOME LAST NIGHT.
WE ARGUED...SHE LEFT MAD AT ME.
WHAT HAVE WE DONE, ELIJAH?
HOW DID WE LET THIS HAPPEN?
NARA DIDN'T DESERVE THIS.
I KNOW...
...BUT IT'S NOT LIKE WE PLANNED IT...
...THINGS JUST...
...HAPPENED.
I DON'T CARE...
WE WERE WRONG.
WHAT DO YOU WANNA DO ABOUT IT?
I DON'T KNOW...
RIGHT NOW WE JUST NEED TO WORRY ABOUT FINDING NARA...
...THIS ISN'T LIKE HER.
SHOULD WE GO LOOK FOR HER?
I REALLY NEED TO GO SEE MOM TODAY.
I HAVEN'T SPOKEN TO HER IN OVER A WEEK.
GO SEE YOUR MOM...
I'LL GO SEE IF I CAN FIND NARA.
I'LL HAVE MY CELL IF YOU NEED ME.
OKAY... THANKS, ELIJAH.

GOOD MORNING.
HOW LONG HAVE I BEEN ASLEEP?

NEARLY SEVEN HOURS.
THAT'S THE MOST SLEEP I'VE GOTTEN IN WEEKS.

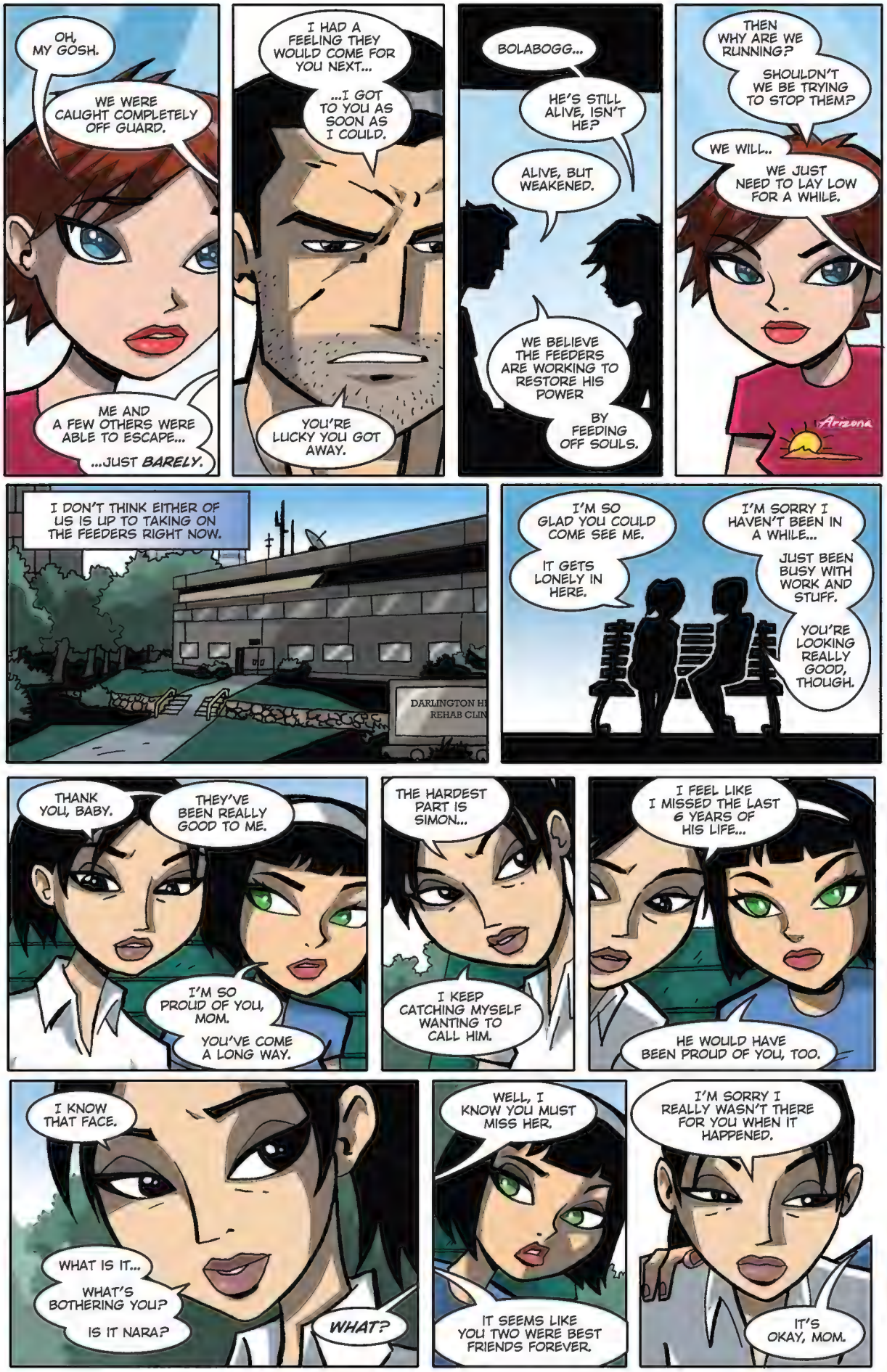
WHERE ARE WE?

TWO STATES AWAY.
I'M HUNGRY.

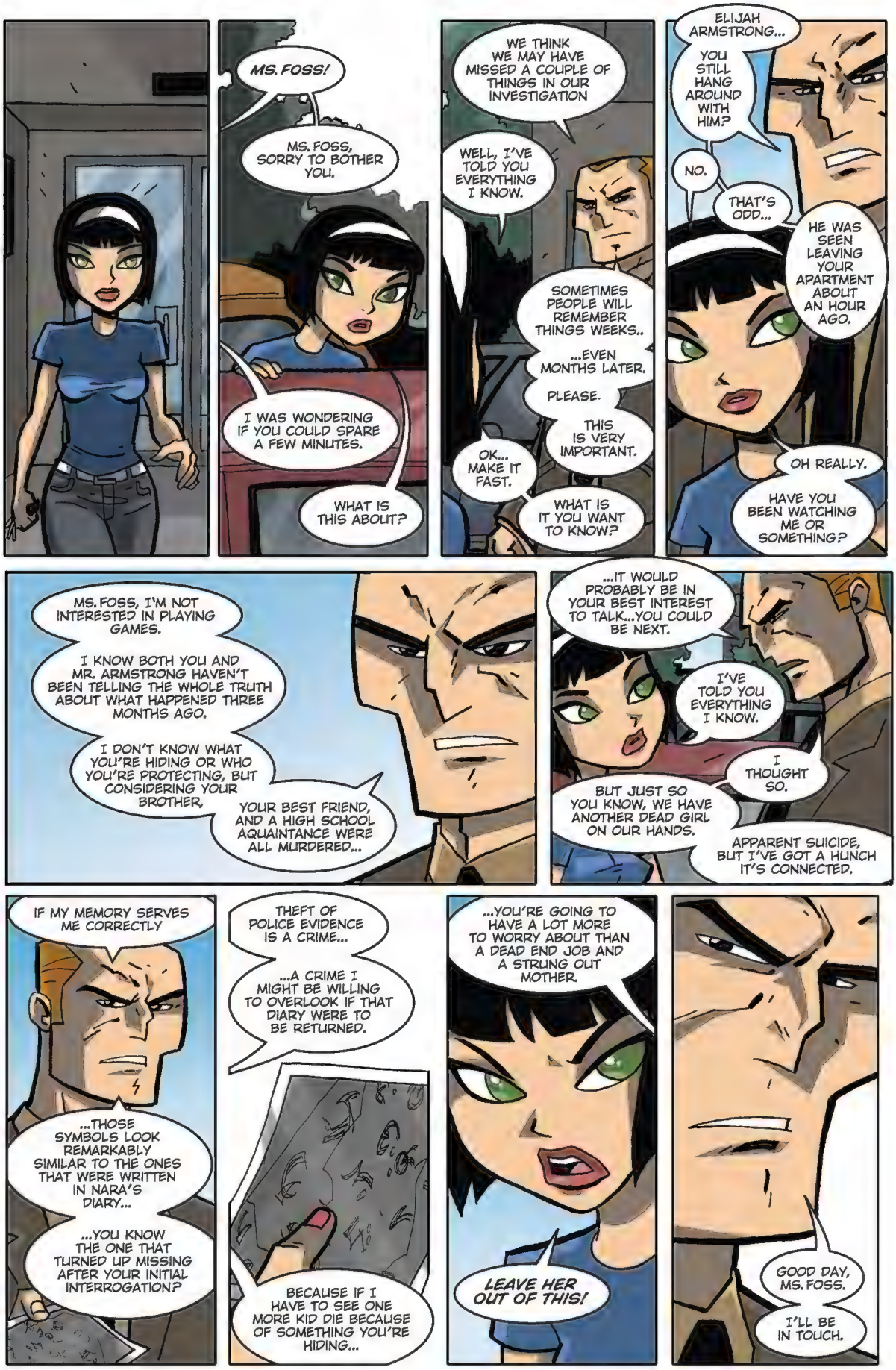

DINER
Gift Shop
INER

UMM... I'LL HAVE THE CHICKEN...
..WITH A SIDE OF HASHBROWNS AND A SLICE OF CHOCOLATE CAKE.
AND YOU, SIR?

NOTHING FOR ME, THANKS.
JUST COFFEE, BLACK.
BE RIGHT OUT.
NOTHING?
NOEL, YOU DON'T LOOK SO HOT. WHEN'S THE LAST TIME YOU ATE?
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT. JUST DON'T HAVE MUCH OF AN APPETITE RIGHT NOW.
I'M JUST CONCERNED FOR YOU...
FORGET IT.
SO... HOW'VE YOU BEEN?
I GET THE FEELING THINGS AREN'T SO WELL.
WHAT MAKES YOU SAY THAT?
YOU WERE TALKING IN YOUR SLEEP.
OH...HOPE I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING TOO EMBARRASSING.
YOU MENTIONED HAZY...
EVERYTHING OKAY BETWEEN YOU TWO?
NO... NOT EXACTLY.
YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT.
NOT REALLY.
SO... WHAT'S GOING ON?
I ASSUME WE'RE GOING TO THE PROTECTORATE.
NO...
WHY?
THERE *IS* NO PROTECTORATE...
...NOT *ANYMORE.*
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
THEY'RE DEAD...
...DEAD OR IN HIDING.
THOSE MEN WHO ATTACKED YOU...
..THE FEEDERS...
...THEY INFILTRATED OUR RANKS. AFTER THE DARGO/BOLABOGG INCIDENT,
THEY DIDN'T WASTE ANY TIME EXACTING THEIR REVENGE.


OH, MY GOSH.
WE WERE CAUGHT COMPLETELY OFF GUARD.
ME AND A FEW OTHERS WERE ABLE TO ESCAPE...
...JUST BARELY.
I HAD A FEELING THEY WOULD COME FOR YOU NEXT...
...I GOT TO YOU AS SOON AS I COULD.
YOU'RE LUCKY YOU GOT AWAY.
BOLABOGG...
HE'S STILL ALIVE, ISN'T HE?
ALIVE, BUT WEAKENED.
WE BELIEVE THE FEEDERS ARE WORKING TO RESTORE HIS POWER
BY FEEDING OFF SOULS.
THEN WHY ARE WE RUNNING?
SHOULDN'T WE BE TRYING TO STOP THEM?
WE WILL..
WE JUST NEED TO LAY LOW FOR A WHILE.
Arizona
I DON'T THINK EITHER OF US IS UP TO TAKING ON THE FEEDERS RIGHT NOW.
I'M SO GLAD YOU COULD COME SEE ME.
IT GETS LONELY IN HERE.
I'M SORRY I HAVEN'T BEEN IN A WHILE...
JUST BEEN BUSY WITH WORK AND STUFF.
YOU'RE LOOKING REALLY GOOD, THOUGH.
THANK YOU, BABY.
THEY'VE BEEN REALLY GOOD TO ME.
I'M SO PROUD OF YOU, MOM.
YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY.
THE HARDEST PART IS SIMON...
I KEEP CATCHING MYSELF WANTING TO CALL HIM.
I FEEL LIKE I MISSED THE LAST 6 YEARS OF HIS LIFE...
HE WOULD HAVE BEEN PROUD OF YOU, TOO.
I KNOW THAT FACE.
WHAT IS IT...
WHAT'S BOTHERING YOU?
IS IT NARA?
WHAT?
WELL, I KNOW YOU MUST MISS HER.
IT SEEMS LIKE YOU TWO WERE BEST FRIENDS FOREVER.
I'M SORRY I REALLY WASN'T THERE FOR YOU WHEN IT HAPPENED.
IT'S OKAY, MOM.

...VIOLET...
YOU KNOW MY VOICE.
YOU HAVE NOWHERE ELSE TO TURN.
COME TO ME...
AND I WILL GIVE YOU PURPOSE...
DON'T RESIST ME!
WHAT HAS LIFE OFFERED YOU BUT ABUSE...
...TORMENT...
...AND ANGUISH?
EVEN IN DEATH THERE WAS NO ESCAPE FOR YOU.
THERE IS NO TRUTH BUT MY OWN.
GIVE YOURSELF TO ME.


MS. FOSS!
MS. FOSS, SORRY TO BOTHER YOU.
I WAS WONDERING IF YOU COULD SPARE A FEW MINUTES.
WHAT IS THIS ABOUT?
WE THINK WE MAY HAVE MISSED A COUPLE OF THINGS IN OUR INVESTIGATION
WELL, I'VE TOLD YOU EVERYTHING I KNOW.
SOMETIMES PEOPLE WILL REMEMBER THINGS WEEKS..
...EVEN MONTHS LATER.
PLEASE.
THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT.
OK... MAKE IT FAST.
WHAT IS IT YOU WANT TO KNOW?
ELIJAH ARMSTRONG...
YOU STILL HANG AROUND WITH HIM?
NO.
THAT'S ODD...
HE WAS SEEN LEAVING YOUR APARTMENT ABOUT AN HOUR AGO.
OH REALLY.
HAVE YOU BEEN WATCHING ME OR SOMETHING?
MS. FOSS, I'M NOT INTERESTED IN PLAYING GAMES.
I KNOW BOTH YOU AND MR. ARMSTRONG HAVEN'T BEEN TELLING THE WHOLE TRUTH ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED THREE MONTHS AGO.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE HIDING OR WHO YOU'RE PROTECTING, BUT CONSIDERING YOUR BROTHER,
YOUR BEST FRIEND, AND A HIGH SCHOOL AQUAINTANCE WERE ALL MURDERED...
...IT WOULD PROBABLY BE IN YOUR BEST INTEREST TO TALK...YOU COULD BE NEXT.
I'VE TOLD YOU EVERYTHING I KNOW.
I THOUGHT SO.
BUT JUST SO YOU KNOW, WE HAVE ANOTHER DEAD GIRL ON OUR HANDS.
APPARENT SUICIDE, BUT I'VE GOT A HUNCH IT'S CONNECTED.
IF MY MEMORY SERVES ME CORRECTLY
...THOSE SYMBOLS LOOK REMARKABLY SIMILAR TO THE ONES THAT WERE WRITTEN IN NARA'S DIARY...
...YOU KNOW THE ONE THAT TURNED UP MISSING AFTER YOUR INITIAL INTERROGATION?
THEFT OF POLICE EVIDENCE IS A CRIME...
...A CRIME I MIGHT BE WILLING TO OVERLOOK IF THAT DIARY WERE TO BE RETURNED.
BECAUSE IF I HAVE TO SEE ONE MORE KID DIE BECAUSE OF SOMETHING YOU'RE HIDING...
...YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE A LOT MORE TO WORRY ABOUT THAN A DEAD END JOB AND A STRUNG OUT MOTHER.
LEAVE HER OUT OF THIS!
GOOD DAY, MS. FOSS.
I'LL BE IN TOUCH.

BWEE
BOO
DWEEP
HAZY?
ANY LUCK?
NO, NOTHING.
ELIJAH, I JUST RAN INTO THAT DETECTIVE...
HE WAS ASKING QUESTIONS AGAIN.
WHAT?
I'M SCARED, ELIJAH...
THEY'RE WATCHING US...
PLEASE BE CAREFUL.
I THINK THERE'S ANOTHER GIRL...
A GIRL LIKE NARA.
YOU KNOW THE ONE THAT COMMITTED SUICIDE A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO?
YEAH, VIOLET GREY...
MY FRIEND JIM USED TO DATE HER.
WELL, THEY FOUND THOSE SYMBOLS IN HER ROOM, JUST LIKE IN NARA'S DIARY...
IF SHE'S LIKE NARA, MAYBE SHE'S NOT DEAD.
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?
I DON'T KNOW...
BUT WE HAVE TO FIND HER BEFORE SOMEONE ELSE DOES.
SO I GUESS THAT MEANS I'M ON UNDEAD SCHOOLGIRL PATROL.
THIS ISN'T FUNNY.
WELL, I COULD USE A LITTLE HELP HERE.
I HAVE TO BE AT WORK IN AN HOUR.
CALL IN SICK.
I CAN'T LOSE MY JOB...
HAZY... HOLD ON!
YOU'RE NOT GOING TO BELIEVE THIS BUT I THINK I JUST FOUND HER.
I'LL CALL YOU BACK!
HEY, BABY...
LOOKING GOOD IN THAT SKIRT...
HEY!
GET OFF HER!
PUNK...

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHH!!
OH, GOD...
AHHH!
MY EYE!!
YOU LITTLE #*%&*!!
C'MON, VIOLET.
WE'RE GOING!

CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING?
SHOOT.
MY PARENTS...
MY REAL PARENTS...
DID YOU KNOW THEM?
YES.
YOU REMIND ME A LOT OF YOUR MOTHER, ACTUALLY.
ARE THEY STILL ALIVE?
WERE THE THINGS THAT DARGO TOLD ME ABOUT THEM TRUE?
I'VE AVOIDED TELLING YOU ABOUT YOUR PARENTS FOR A REASON.
I KNOW YOU'VE HAD A LOT TO DEAL WITH LATELY...
I DIDN'T KNOW IF YOU WERE READY.
I NEED TO KNOW...
GREAT.
WHAT?
WE'VE GOT A FLAT.
YOU HAVE A SPARE, DON'T YOU?
THAT WAS THE SPARE.
WHAT DO WE DO?
WE WALK.

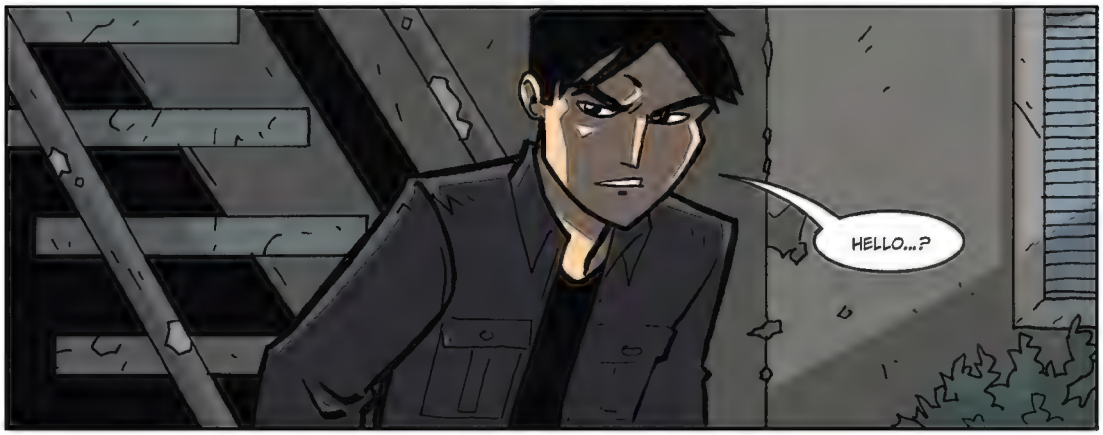
OH MY GOSH...
YOU FOUND HER?
SHE'S ALIVE?
SHE'S DEFINITELY LIKE NARA...
SHE'S GOOD WITH SHARP OBJECTS.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
WHAT HAPPENED?
SHE ATTACKED SOME GUY...
I GRABBED HER AND PUT HER IN THE CAR, THEN SHE PASSED OUT.
SHE JUST KEEPS MUMBLING TO HERSELF.
iwelsdkqwijjenfea
WERE YOU FOLLOWED...
DID YOU SEE ANY POLICE?
NO, I DON'T THINK SO.
NO....
gerwlqpkdksnvs
DETECTIVE...
ARMSTRONG JUST RETURNED TO THE GIRL'S APARTMENT....
HE WAS CARRYING SOMEONE...
DEFINITELY FEMALE.
STAY THERE...
I'M ON MY WAY.
...agtrleagswtaaslheesrceom...
VIOLET...
CAN YOU HEAR ME?
WE WANT TO HELP YOU.

I'M SCARED, ELIJAH...
CAN THIS *REALLY* BE HAPPENING ALL OVER AGAIN?
I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN DO THIS...
IT'S ALL TOO MUCH.
I KNOW... WE JUST NEED TO STAY CALM.
I WISH NARA WAS HERE...
HAZY...
I KNOW..
BUT I CAN'T JUST SHUT OFF MY FEELINGS...
I NEED YOU, ELIJAH.
EXCUSE ME!
I'M A POLICE OFFICER!
STEP OUT WHERE I CAN SEE YOU...
HUNTED

DID YOU HEAR THAT?
WHAT?
SOUNDED LIKE SCREAMING.
STAY HERE, I'LL CHECK IT OUT.
BE CAREFUL.
VIOLET?
VIOLET...
YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AFRAID. WE CAN HELP YOU.
AHHH!
OMIGOSH, YOU SCARED ME!
ARE YOU OKAY?
I KNOW WE HAVEN'T MET...
I'M HAZY...

THE VOICES... THE VOICES SAY...
...I HAVE TO HURT YOU.
NO...
WAIT!

HOW MUCH FURTHER?
JUST A COUPLE MILES TO THE NEXT TOWN...
WE'LL GET A ROOM AND GET THE CAR TAKEN CARE OF FIRST THING IN THE MORNING.
UHH...
AAHH
ARIZONA

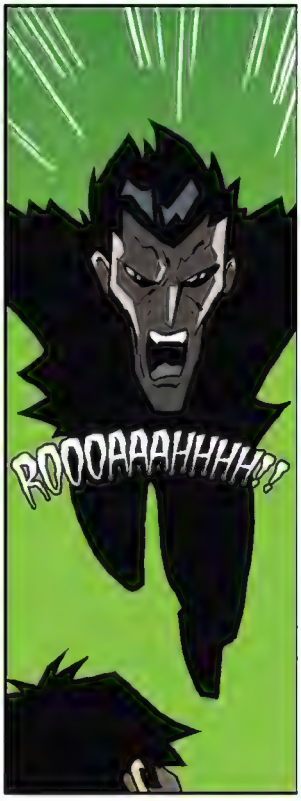

HELLO...?

AAAAAHHH!
HAZY!

SMACK

WHAT THE...
WHAT ARE YOU?

HEH
HEH
HEH


ROOOAAAHHHH!!

WHAT DO YOU WANT?
A KISS?
HAAAAZZZZ
GAAAK!
FREEZE!
POLICE!
TURN AROUND!
HANDS UP!
SLLL
AAAAHH!

NARA! ARE YOU ALRIGHT? WHAT HAPPENED?
IT'S HAZY...
...SOMETHING'S WRONG...
...SHE'S HURT.
HUH?
PLEASE...
DON'T DO THIS...
...VIOLET, PLEASE...

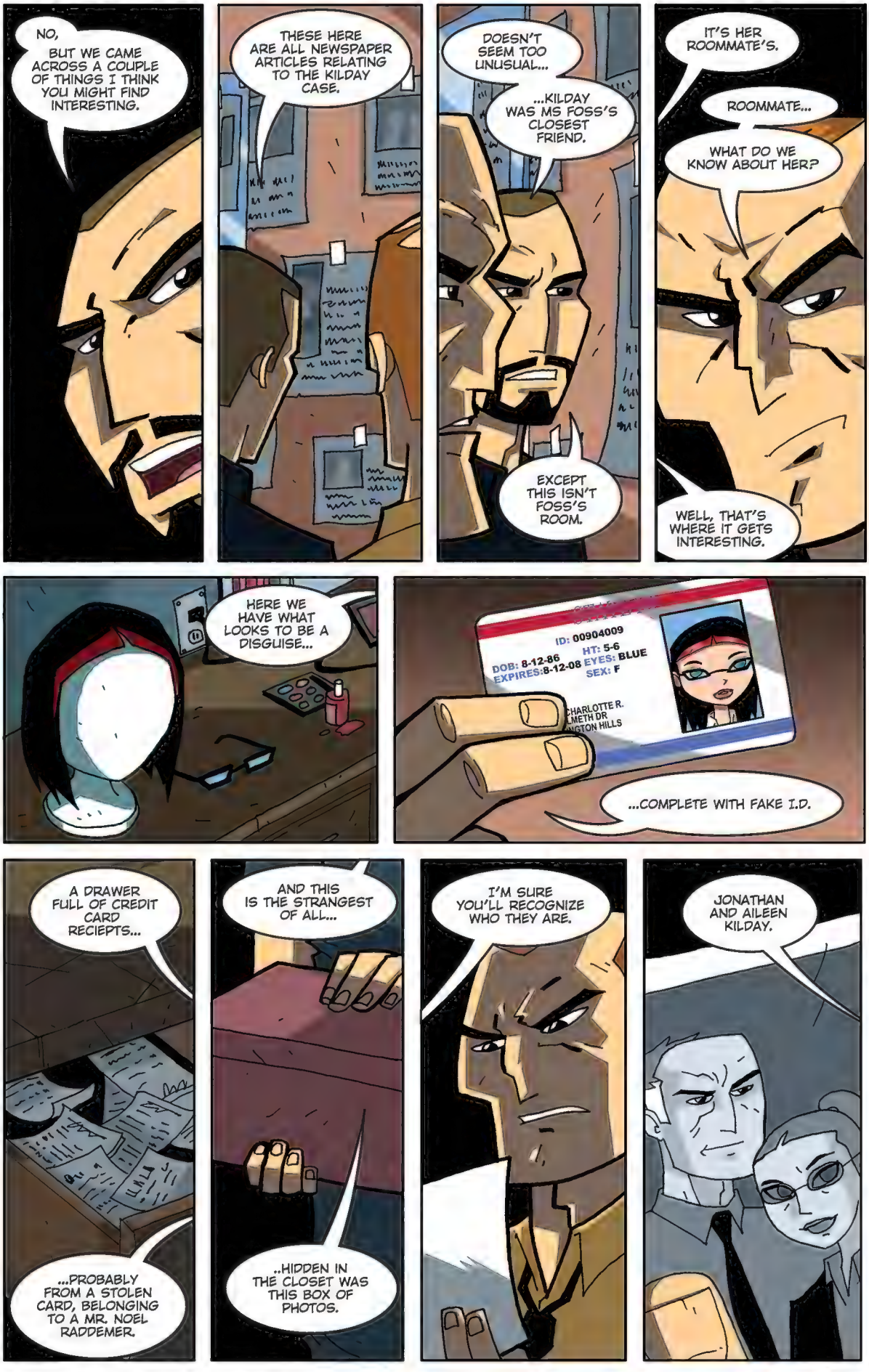
CHAPTER 3
POLICE

CHIEF.

WHAT D'WE GOT, DETECTIVE?
A MISSING GIRL,
...A YOUNG MAN IN A COMA,
AND-
AND A DEAD OFFICER.
YES, SIR.
AND THE SUSPECT?
I CHASED HIM FOR ABOUT A BLOCK, BUT HE WAS TOO FAST...
I LOST HIM.

BUT I DID GET A PRETTY GOOD LOOK...
30-35, DARK HAIR, DARK CLOTHING, PALE SKIN...
HOW ABOUT THAT ARM?
YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE ME IF I TOLD YOU.
TRY ME.
THE SUSPECT...
HE.. WELL...
I *THINK* HE SPIT SOMETHING ON ME,
SOME KIND OF ACID.
NOT TOO SURE, IT HAPPENED SO FAST.
WELL, DETECTIVE, SOUNDS LIKE YOU GOT YOUR HANDS FULL.
WHICH IS WHY I'VE CALLED IN THE FBI.
SIR, *PLEASE!*
JUST GIVE ME A LITTLE MORE TIME. I THINK I'M ON TO-

DETECTIVE FALCONE...
...WE HAVE THE SAME YOUNG MAN AND WOMAN INVOLVED IN THIS CASE THAT WERE AT THE CENTER OF THE KILDAY CASE 3 MONTHS AGO.
YOUR ***FAILURE*** TO SOLVE THAT CASE AND TO PREVENT MORE KIDS FROM GETTING KILLED ***DEMANDS*** THAT I DO EVERYTHING IN MY POWER TO PREVENT THIS DEPARTMENT FROM BECOMING A NATIONAL EMBARRASSMENT.
I TAKE IT THINGS DIDN'T GO WELL WITH THE CHIEF.
WE'VE GOT TO FIND THAT GIRL.
HE'S CALLED IN THE FBI.
AS SOON AS THEY GET INVOLVED, WE'LL BE SHUT OUT.
TO BE PERFECTLY HONEST, DETECTIVE,
I DON'T THINK WE'RE GONNA FIND HER ALIVE...
...THERE WAS A LOT OF BLOOD.
THE KEY TO ALL THIS IS LYING AT MEMORIAL HOSPITAL IN A COMA.
ELIJAH ARMSTRONG.
I TAKE IT HE'S OFF YOUR SUSPECT LIST.
NOT ***YET.***
NOT UNTIL I FIND OUT WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON HERE.
YOU HAD ANY LUCK TURNING UP THAT DIARY?


NO,
BUT WE CAME ACROSS A COUPLE OF THINGS I THINK YOU MIGHT FIND INTERESTING.
THESE HERE ARE ALL NEWSPAPER ARTICLES RELATING TO THE KILDAY CASE.
DOESN'T SEEM TOO UNUSUAL...
...KILDAY WAS MS FOSS'S CLOSEST FRIEND.
EXCEPT THIS ISN'T FOSS'S ROOM.
IT'S HER ROOMMATE'S.
ROOMMATE...
WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT HER?
WELL, THAT'S WHERE IT GETS INTERESTING.
HERE WE HAVE WHAT LOOKS TO BE A DISGUISE...
ID: 00904009
HT: 5-6
DOB: 8-12-86
EYES: BLUE
EXPIRES: 8-12-08
SEX: F
...COMPLETE WITH FAKE I.D.
A DRAWER FULL OF CREDIT CARD RECIEPTS...
...PROBABLY FROM A STOLEN CARD, BELONGING TO A MR. NOEL RADDEMER.
AND THIS IS THE STRANGEST OF ALL...
..HIDDEN IN THE CLOSET WAS THIS BOX OF PHOTOS.
I'M SURE YOU'LL RECOGNIZE WHO THEY ARE.
JONATHAN AND AILEEN KILDAY.

NARA...
NARA...
NARA...!
HELP ME!
NO!
NOW YOU ARE MINE!
ELIJAH!

HELLO!
WHO'RE YOU?
NAME'S WINSTON
DON'T WORRY
YOU'RE SAFE.
YOU'RE IN THE HOUSE OF GOD.
I'M A FRIEND OF NOEL'S
WHEN HE DIDN'T SHOW UP AT THE RENDEZVOUS POINT, I THOUGHT I'D GO LOOKING FOR HIM
THAT'S WHEN I FOUND YOU TWO STRANDED ON THE SIDE OF THE ROAD. YOU WERE...
...BARELY CONSCIOUS.
WHERE'S NOEL?
HE'S GETTING SHOWERED AND CLEANED UP.
CAN I GET YOU ANYTHING?
SOMETHING TO DRINK?

NO, I'M FINE, THANKS.
SO...
HOW DO YOU KNOW NOEL?
OH, WE GO WAY BACK...
BEFORE YOU WERE BORN.
I EVEN PERFORMED HIS MARRIAGE CEREMONY.
Arizona
NOEL IS MARRIED?
UM...
...WELL...
HE USED TO BE.
HEY!
SO, I SEE YOU TWO HAVE MET.

I WAS JUST TELLING NARA OF OUR LONG HISTORY.
YOU FEELING BETTER?
FINE...
SOMEWHERE OUTSIDE DARLINGTON HILLS...

KA-TACHOW
MMMMMPPH!!!
TIME TO WAKE UP, BEAUTIFUL.
WE'VE GOT A BIG DAY AHEAD OF US.
YOUR FRIEND NARA STILL HAS YET TO SHOW HER FACE...
...BUT I KNOW SHE'S OUT THERE...
... I KNOW SHE CAN FEEL YOUR PAIN...
WE'RE JUST GONNA HAVE TO TRY A LITTLE HARDER.
MMMMMPPH!!!
WELL, THATS NO GOOD.
I THINK WE NEED TO HEAR YOU SCREAM.
RIP
NO...
PLEASE STOP!!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THIS!
YOU'RE BEING CONTROLLED, CAN'T YOU SEE THAT?!
SCREAM REAL GOOD FOR ME.

AAAAAAAAHHHH!!!
DARLINGTON MEMORIAL HOSPITAL.
ANY CHANGE DOCTOR?
SORRY, DETECTIVE.
HE'S STABILIZED, BUT WE'RE NO CLOSER TO FIGURING OUT WHAT'S WRONG.
HE'S BEEM COMPLETELY NON-RESPONSIVE.
HE'S THE KEY TO MY INVESTIGATION.
I NEED HIM CONSCIOUS.
I UNDERSTAND, BUT AT THIS POINT THERE IS NOTHING WE CAN DO BUT WAIT.
JUST KEEP ME UPDATED, DOCTOR.
I WANT TO KNOW THE MOMENT HE WAKES UP.

DARLINGTON HILLS REHAB CLINIC.
BREAKING NEWS
OH MY GOD!
4 NEWS
TURN IT UP!
...LOCAL 17 YEAR OLD HAZY FOSS.
SHE IS PRESUMED TO BE IN IMMEDIATE DANGER...
...AND IN NEED OF MEDICAL ATTENTION.
IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION IN REGARDS TO HER ABDUCTION OR WHEREABOUTS...
...PLEASE CONTACT THE POLICE DEPARTMENT OR THIS STATION.
...I'D NEVER SEEN THE LIKES OF IT BEFORE, AND BELIEVE ME, I'VE SEEN IT ALL.
BUT I DIDN'T RUN WITHOUT A FIGHT.
I NEVER UNDERSTOOD WHY YOU WOULDN'T JOIN THE PROTECTORATE...
WE REALLY COULD'VE USED YOU.

I KNOW...
IT JUST WASN'T MY STYLE.
MY CONGREGATION NEEDED ME.
I'M SORRY NOEL...
I'M SORRY FOR THE LOSS OF YOUR FRIENDS...
YOUR CAREER...
EXCUSE ME.
SHE ALRIGHT?
HEY...
WHAT'S UP?
WHY ARE WE HERE?

WINSTON IS THE ONLY PERSON LEFT THAT I CAN TRUST.
I'VE LOST EVERYTHING NARA...
EVERYONE I KNEW AND CARED ABOUT.
I NEED TIME TO REEVALUATE...
FIGURE THINGS OUT...
WHY'D YOU FEEL THE NEED TO BRING ME WITH YOU?
WHAT?
SINCE THE DAY I MET YOU, YOU'VE NEVER GIVEN A COMPLETE ANSWER TO ANYTHING...
WHAT HAVE YOU GOT TO HIDE?
OKAY, SLOW DOWN.
WHERE IS THIS COMING FROM?
THAT VISION I HAD...
...WHATEVER IT WAS...
...SOMETHING'S HAPPENED TO HAZY AND ELIJAH, AND IT'S MY FAULT...
I NEVER SHOULD HAVE LEFT.
YOU DON'T KNOW THAT...
YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW FOR SURE THAT ANYTHING'S HAPPENED TO THEM.
I AM SURE!
I SAW IT...
I CAN SEE IT NOW!
I CAN FEEL HER CRYING OUT TO ME!
IT WON'T STOP!
I HATE THIS!
I WISH I WAS STILL DEAD...
I WISH NONE OF THIS HAD EVER HAPPENED!
NARA...
WAIT!

I NEED A PHONE.
NOW!
WHAT'S THE RUSH?
HYMNS
I'M LEAVING...
I'M GETTING ON THE NEXT BUS HOME.
NARA!
PLEASE WAIT!
DON'T RUSH INTO ANYTHING!
WAIT OUTSIDE, NOEL.
LET ME TALK TO HER.

SIT DOWN, NARA.
I CAN'T SIT!
I'VE GOT TO HELP MY FRIENDS.
AND YOU WILL...
BUT FOR THE MOMENT, THEY ARE IN GOD'S HANDS, YOU MUST BELIEVE THAT.
YOU KNOW, NARA, MOST PEOPLE WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR A SECOND CHANCE AT LIFE...
YOU SEEM TO TREAT IT AS A BURDEN.
WHAT KIND OF LIFE IS IT THAT I HAVE TO HIDE FROM THE WORLD...
THAT MY FRIENDS HAVE TO SUFFER BECAUSE OF ME?
UNFORTUNATELY, THE RIGHT PATH IS NEVER THE EASIEST ONE.
BUT THERE IS NO GREATER HAPPINESS THAN FULFILLING ONE'S CALLING
I KNOW RIGHT NOW YOU WISH YOU COULD SHRUG YOUR RESPONSIBILITY...
...BUT SOONER OR LATER IT'S GOING TO CATCH UP WITH YOU.

YOU CAN'T RUN FROM GOD FOREVER.
AHH!
WHAT IS IT?
IT'S HAZY...
I HAVE TO GO!
I HAVE TO HELP HER!
THEN GO TO HER.
LET ME HELP.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
CLOSE YOUR EYES...
OPEN YOURSELF UP TO YOUR FULL POTENTIAL...
THAT'S IT...

...EMBRACE YOUR TRUE NATURE.
I CAN SEE IT...
I CAN SEE HOME!
GOOD...
NOW, GO!
BUT BE CAREFUL...
GREAT EVIL AWAITS.

WHAT WAS THAT? WHAT HAPPENED?
WHERE'S NARA?
SHE'S GONE.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN SHE'S GONE? WHAT DID YOU DO?
I ONLY HELPED HER UNLOCK HER POTENTIAL.
WHAT? YOU LET HER GO BACK TO DARLINGTON?
WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?
I THOUGHT I COULD TRUST YOU, WINSTON!

WHY HAVEN'T YOU TOLD HER, NOEL? WHY HAVEN'T YOU TOLD HER THE TRUTH? SHE DESERVES TO KNOW.
IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE!
IT *IS* THAT SIMPLE, YOU JUST ALWAYS MAKE EVERYTHING SO *DARNED* COMPLICATED.
NOEL, YOU NEED TO LET GO.
I KNOW YOU BELIEVE IN HER JUST AS MUCH AS ANYONE, BUT SHE WILL NEVER BECOME WHAT SHE IS MEANT TO BE IF YOU KEEP STANDING IN THE WAY.
I PROMISED... I PROMISED SARA THAT I WOULD WATCH OVER HER... THAT I WOULD TRY TO GIVE HER THE BEST LIFE I COULD.
I KNOW...
NARA IS ALL I HAVE LEFT...
SHE MAY BE ALL ANY OF US HAVE LEFT...
WE'LL HAVE TO FINISH THIS LATER. I HAVE COMPANY.

LORD BOLABOGG AWAITS. IS HIS VESSEL PREPARED?
I AM.
HIS LEGION WILL GO BEFORE HIM...
THEY ARE YOURS TO COMMAND.

CHAPTER 4
NARA!

NARA!
ELIJAH!
WHAT HAPPENED?
HOW ARE YOU HERE?
I DON'T KNOW, BUT YOU HAVE TO FIND HAZY.
WHERE IS SHE?
IT'S VIOLET-SHE'S INSANE!
VIOLET?
YEAH... SHE'S LIKE YOU, ONLY DIFFERENT.
NARA, YOU HAVE TO STOP HER!

OH, NO... HE'S FOUND ME!
WHO? WHO'S FOUND YOU?
HIM!
ELIJAH!
I'LL COME BACK FOR YOU...
I PROMISE!
DETECTIVE!
DETECTIVE FALCONE!
POLICE
WE'RE AGENTS LEWIS AND SITTLER WITH THE FBI.
WE UNDERSTAND YOU HAVE YOUR HANDS FULL.
I THINK I HAVE EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL HERE, AGENTS.
NOT THE WAY WE HEAR IT, DETECTIVE.
WE'LL BE OVERSEEING THIS CASE NOW.

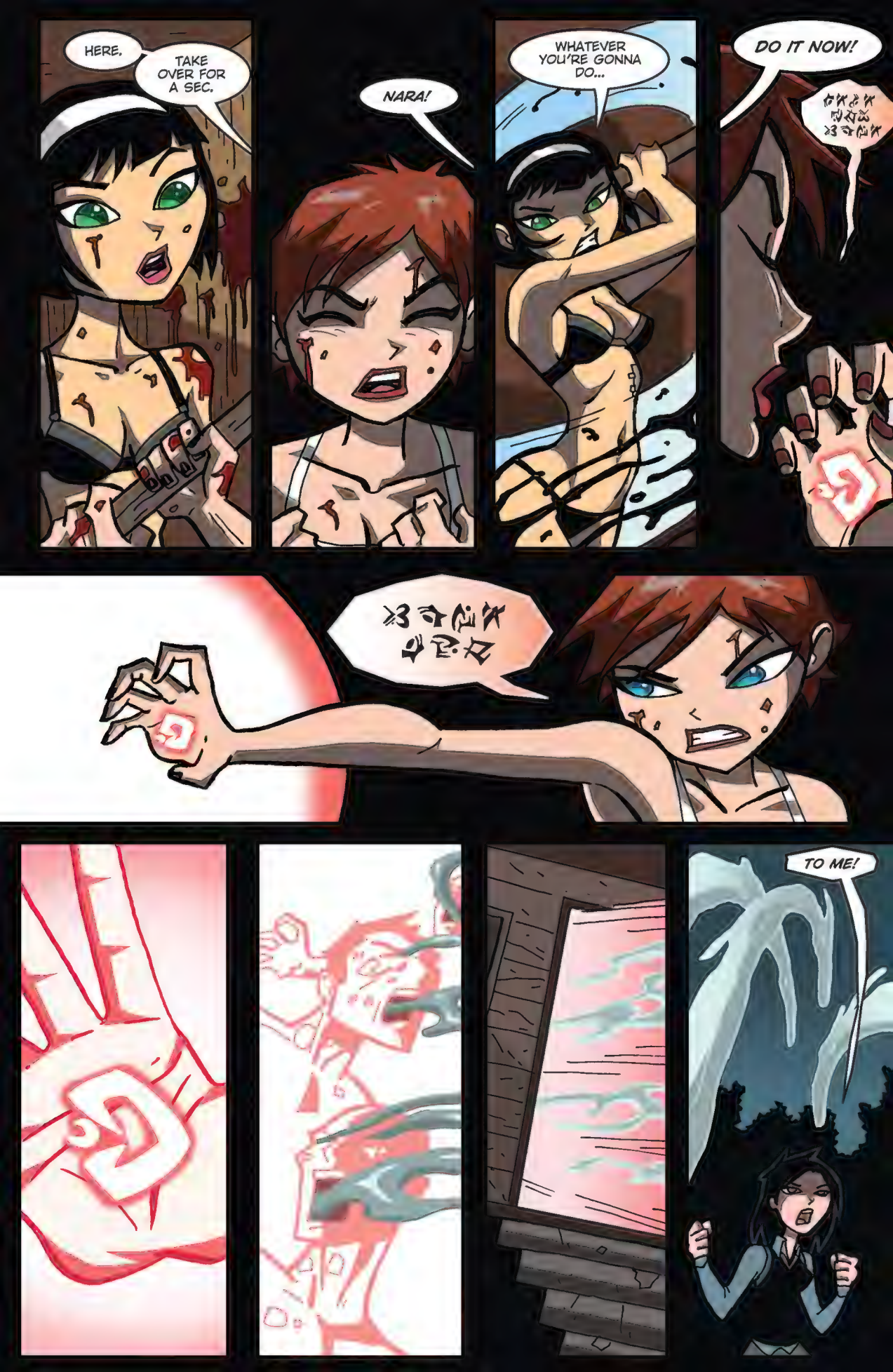
BOO-BWEEP
EXCUSE ME, AGENTS.
FALCONE.
SIR, WE'VE GOT A CONVENIENCE STORE OWNER WHO CLAIMS HE SAW THE MAN WHO MATCHES YOUR DESCRIPTION.
WHERE?
OUT ON HIDDEN LAKE ROAD, JUST A FEW HOURS AGO.
NOT A WORD OF THIS TO ANYONE.
I'M ON MY WAY.
AGENTS.... BEST OF LUCK.
IT'S ALL YOURS.
ELSEWHERE.
LORD BOLABOGG!
WE...
YOUR SERVANTS...
HAVE GIVEN OURSELVES FULLY TO YOU AND HAVE PREPARED THE WAY FOR YOUR RETURN.
PLEASE ACCEPT THESE SOULS AS NOURISHMENT.
MAY YOUR UNHOLY POWER AND GLORY BE INCREASED!
YOUR VESSEL AWAITS!

ZZZZAAAAAHHHHZZZ
HAZY?
HAZY!

NARA!
I'VE BEEN SO WORRIED ABOUT YOU!
OH, HAZY!
I'M SO SORRY.
THIS IS ALL MY FAULT.
SNAP
NARA...
YOU HAVE TO STOP HER!
VIOLET!
I'M HERE!
THE CIRCLE MUST BE PROTECTED!

LEGION!
GURRR
GURRR
BACK INSIDE!
SLAM!
I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU'VE GOT THAT DIARY HANDY?
NOT EXACTLY.
NARA....!

KR-RASH
RRUUUAAARR!!
READY FOR ROUND TWO?!
KA-THOK
WHACK
THUK!
THOK
HOW YOU HOLDIN' UP?
GREAT!
IF YOU'VE GOT ANY PLANS TO USE SOME OF THAT FANCY MAGIC OF YOURS, THEN PLEASE HURRY!


HERE.
TAKE OVER FOR A SEC.
NARA!
WHATEVER YOU'RE GONNA DO...
DO IT NOW!
TO ME!

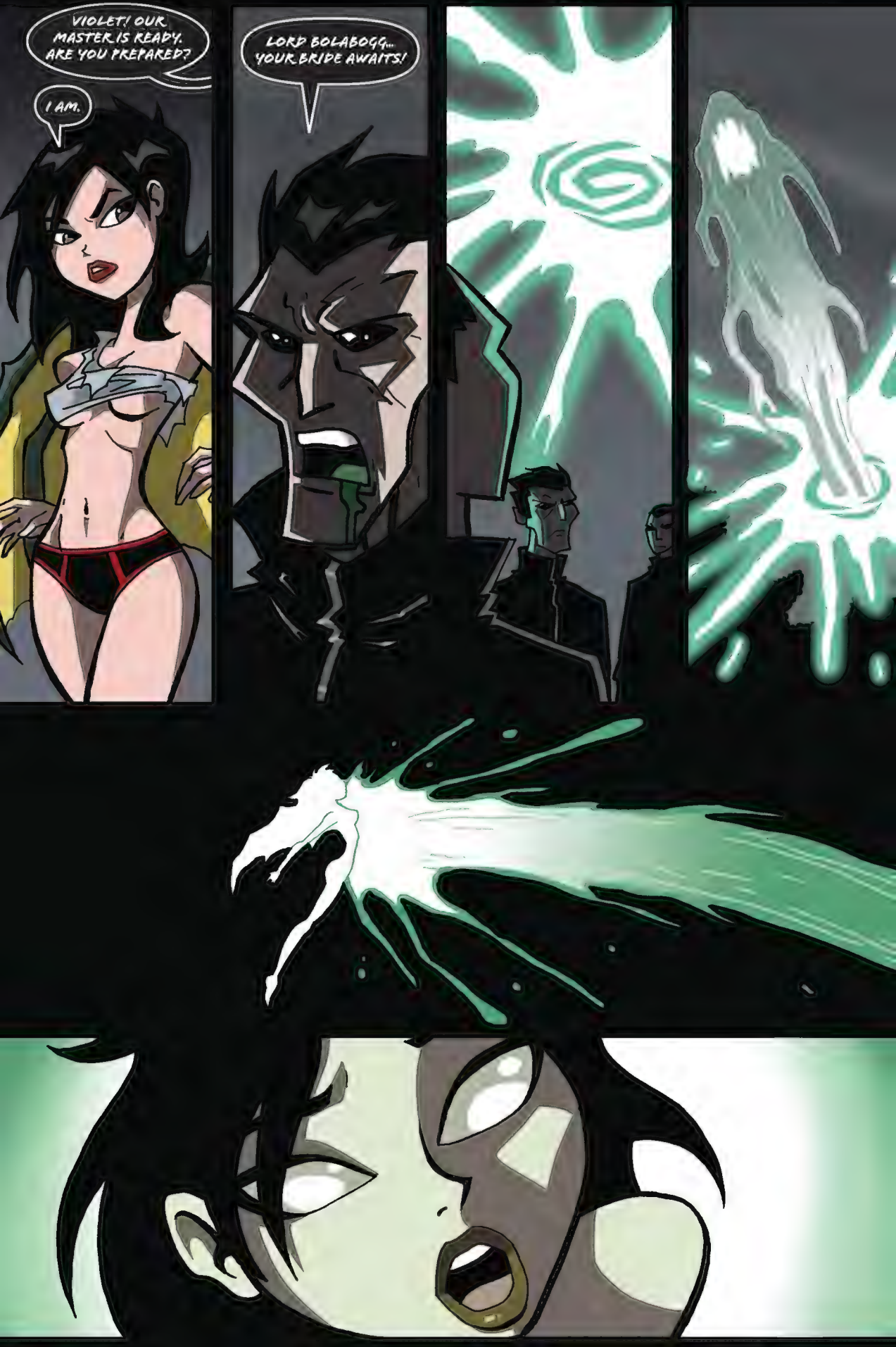
WOW.
NOT BAD...
LET'S GO.
UH-OH.
AAAAAAHHHHH!

HAZY... RUN. NOW!
I'M NOT GOING ANYWHERE.
I'M STAYING WITH YOU.
RUURAAAHHH!
MOVE!!
KA-RAASSH

GET UP, WHORE!
VIOLET.... LISTEN TO ME. YOU CAN FIGHT THIS.
NO MATTER WHAT HE SAYS...HE DOESN'T CONTROL YOU.

I'VE MADE MY CHOICE.

AAAAAHHH!
CRASH!
ED'S AUTOMOTIVE
ED'S
TURN THE CAR AROUND!


VIOLET! OUR MASTER IS READY. ARE YOU PREPARED?
I AM.
LORD BOLABOGG... YOUR BRIDE AWAITS!

NARA!
NARA... GET UP.
IT IS DONE. WE HAVE FULLFILLED OUR TASK
HEAVEN TREMBLES.
GAK!

HAAAZZ
BLAM!
HAAAZ
BLAM!
BLAM!

VIOLET, MY PRECIOUS. DON'T FIGHT IT.
ALL CHANGE IS PAINFUL AT FIRST, BUT IT'S ESSENTIAL. IT MAKES US STRONGER.
JUST LET MY BEING FILL EVERY PART OF YOU. THE PAIN WILL FADE IN TIME.
VIOLET!
HOW'S THAT "CHOICE" TREATING YOU?
RRAAAH!

SO IT REALLY IS TRUE, THEN. YOU'VE BECOME BOLABOGG'S BITCH.
AAAHH!
IN THE END, WE'RE ALL SOMEONE'S BITCH.
YOU JUST CHOSE THE LOSING SIDE.
UNNFF!

PATHETIC. YOU *REALLY* THINK YOU CAN BEAT ME.
I'VE ALREADY DONE IT ONCE, REMEMBER?
AND BEFORE I DO IT *AGAIN*, YOU'RE GOING TO *FREE* ELIJAH'S SOUL...
...AND *RELEASE* YOUR HOLD ON VIOLET!
GWG
GAK
NO!
SMACK!
VIOLET *WANTS* THIS. SHE HAS *GIVEN* HERSELF TO ME AND MY FUTURE GLORY.
YOU WERE FOOLISH TO REFUSE ME. NOW, YOU WILL *SUFFER* FOR IT.

HERE IS BUT A TASTE OF THE POWER YOU HAVE DENIED.
NO!

GOD'S CHOSEN...
...REDUCED TO THIS. IF ONLY YOU HAD JUST BEEN A GOOD LITTLE GIRL, YOU COULD HAVE SAVED US BOTH SO MUCH TROUBLE.
NARA!
NARA!

NARA! WE WERE WORRIED... WHERE'VE YOU BEEN?
HAZY... WHAT IS IT?
MOM'S DEAD... THEY FOUND HER LAST NIGHT.
AFTER I WENT MISSING, SHE COULDN'T TAKE IT ANYMORE.
SHE TOOK HER OWN LIFE. IT'S NOT RIGHT! SHE WAS GETTING BETTER!
NARA, I CAN'T DO THIS ANYMORE.
HAZY, I'M -
MAYBE IT'S BEST IF YOU JUST GO.

THAT WAS QUICK.
C'MON, NOEL. LET'S GO.
THIS IS IT... THIS COULD BE OUR BIG BREAK.
STAY CLOSE.
HOLD UP, DETECTIVE! WE NEED TO TALK!
United BUSWAYS
Ticketing
AFTERNOON, YOUNG LADY.
LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE GOT A LITTLE ONE READY TO TAKE THE WORLD BY STORM.
YOU HAVE NO IDEA.

BOOK 3
revolution

CHAPTER 1
YOU SEEM TENSE, IF YOU DON'T MIND ME SAYING SO.
NERVOUS?
WOULDN'T BE HUMAN IF I WASN'T.
RELAX.
THINGS ARE GOING GREAT.
MAYBE THIS WILL HELP.
TAKE A LOOK.
THE LATEST NEWSTIME POLL.
YOU'RE UP BY 4 POINTS.
ROGERS HAS ONLY A TWO POINT LEAD.
SHOULDN'T BE TOO HARD TO CLOSE THAT GAP...
ESPECIALLY IF THE WAR CONTINUES TO SPIRAL INTO DISASTER.
NOTHING CAN GO WRONG, JAMES.
I'VE WAITED... PLANNED FOR TOO LONG.

WE ARE COMING TO YOU LIVE FROM CENTENNIAL, COLORADO, WHERE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE SENATOR VIC ALCASAN WILL BE ARRIVING SHORTLY.
ALONG WITH DISCUSSING HIS VIEWS ON DOMESTIC POLICY, THE SENATOR IS EXPECTED TO LAY OUT HIS VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF AMERICA AS A MORE ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY.
ALCASAN! ALCASAN! ALCASAN!
ALCASAN! ALCASAN! ALCASAN!
ALCASAN! ALCASAN! ALCASAN!
ALCASAN! ALCASAN! ALCASAN!
ALCASAN! ALCASAN! ALCASAN!
ALCASAN! ALCASAN! ALCASAN!
ALCASAN! ALCASAN! ALCASAN!
ALCASAN President
WE ♥ ALCASAN!
ALCASAN! ALCASAN! ALCASAN!
ALCASAN! ALCASAN! ALCASAN!
ALCASAN! ALCASAN! ALCASAN!
ALCASAN! ALCASAN! ALCASAN!
THANK YOU!
THANK YOU!
ALCASAN! ALCASAN! ALCASAN!
ALCASAN! ALCASAN! ALCASAN!

BLAM!!!
SHOTS FIRED!
SHOTS FIRED!
GET DOWN!
OH MY GOD!
SENATOR ALCASAN HAS BEEN SHOT!
for President

NARA...
IT'S ME. I'M HERE.

WHO ARE YOU?
DON'T YOU REMEMBER?
I'M HERE... WAITING FOR YOU.
KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK
HUH?!
KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK
WHO IS IT?
IT'S ME!
YOU AWAKE?
I AM NOW.
I WANT TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING.

Owens
DISCOUNT
MOTEL
YOU GOT ME UP IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT TO SHOW ME SOMETHING IN YOUR BATHROOM? AM I GOING TO BE DISGUSTED OR MERELY HORRIFIED?
FLIP A COIN.
NOEL -
WHO IS THIS?
ARE YOU CRAZY?
THIS IS THE GUY THAT'S BEEN FOLLOWING US FOR THE PAST 300 MILES.
I CAUGHT HIM SNOOPING AROUND OUTSIDE.
AND HERE'S THE BEST PART...
...HE'S A FEEDER.
HAAAAAAZZZZ!!!

CRACK
WHY ARE YOU FOLLOWING US?
HE'S NOT GONNA TALK.
I'VE ALREADY TRIED.
MAYBE I CAN BE A LITTLE MORE PERSUASIVE.

START TALKING!
I AM A SERVANT OF MY LORD, BOLABOGG.
THAT'S NICE.
NOW TELL ME WHERE HE IS -
WHERE'S VIOLET?
HEHHAH HEH
YOU'RE TOO LATE.
YOU'VE ALREADY LOST AND YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW IT.
HMMMPPH!
SIT TIGHT.

SLAM!
812
SO WHAT NOW?
I HAVE A FEELING WE'RE GETTING CLOSE.
BB-Q
SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

EXCUSE ME, WE'RE LOOKING FOR A MISSING GIRL. SHE'S BEEN SPOTTED IN THE AREA.
MAYBE YOU'VE SEEN HER?
SORRY. A LOT OF PEOPLE COME THROUGH HERE.
YOU DIDN'T EVEN LOOK AT IT! LOOK!
IF WE DON'T FIND HER THERE'S GONNA BE HELL TO PAY FOR EVERYONE!
GET OFF ME, LADY, BEFORE I CALL THE COPS!
NARA!
NOEL, LOOK!
GREAT.

HEY! GET BACK HERE!
THONK!
NICE.
THANKS.
WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?
HEHHAH HEH

NOEL...WE'VE GOT A PROBLEM.
HEHEHEHEH
I THINK WE'VE BEEN LED INTO A TRAP.
I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT.

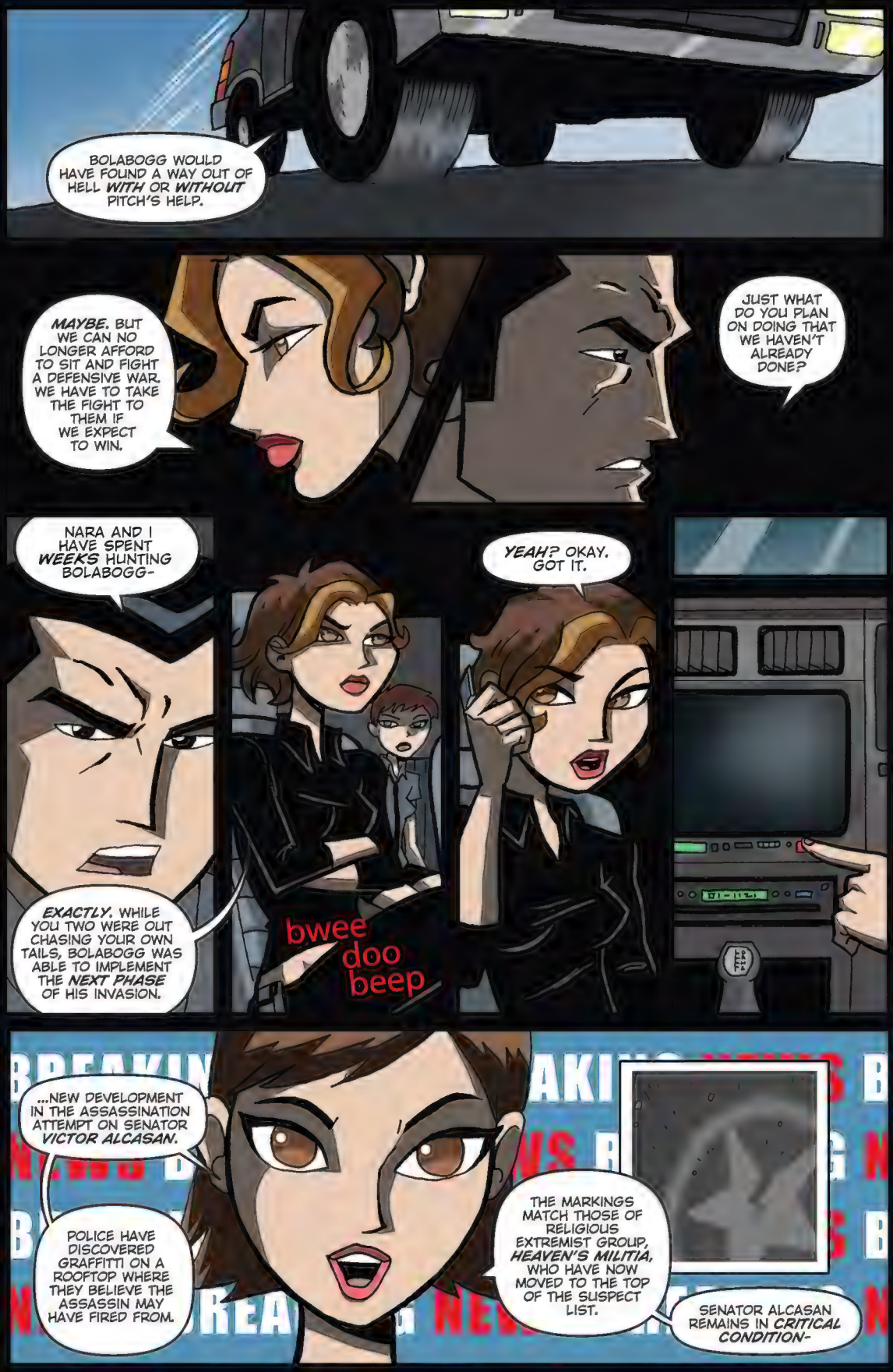
SOMETHING'S WRONG! MY POWERS AREN'T WORKING!
THEN WE'LL HAVE TO DO THIS THE OLD FASHIONED WAY!
SMACK!
THUNK!
CRACK!

HAAAZZ!!!
BLAM!
GET OFF-
BLAM!
GET IN THE CAR!

WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? NOW!
NARA! GO!
YOU, TOO, RADDEMER!
THINGS JUST GOT REALLY INTERESTING.
STEP ON IT!
SCREEEECH!

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE?
A LITTLE THANK YOU WOULD BE NICE.
I'D RATHER TAKE MY CHANCES WITH THE FEEDERS.
UHH, TIME OUT! I'M ASSUMING YOU TWO KNOW EACH OTHER...
UNFORTUNATELY.
SOMEONE'S BITTER. IF ANYONE HAS A RIGHT TO HOLD A GRUDGE, IT SHOULD BE ME. AFTERALL, IT WAS YOU THAT-
LET'S NOT GET INTO THIS RIGHT NOW.
ANYWAY. MY NAME'S JOAN. IT'S AN HONOR TO FINALLY MEET YOU... NARA RADDEMER.
EXCUSE ME?
JOAN...
OH... DID I SAY SOMETHING WRONG?
IT'S NARA KILDAY, ACTUALLY.

RIGHT. SORRY ABOUT THAT.
YOU HAVE SOME EXPLAINING TO DO.
SO WHY ARE YOU HERE, JOAN? WHAT'S YOUR ANGLE?
THERE'S NO HIDDEN MOTIVE IF THAT'S WHAT YOUR INSINUATING. THERE WERE RUMORS OF A HANDSOME MAN IN A BLACK TIE MAKING SOME NOISE IN THE AREA. WE DECIDED TO INVESTIGATE.
WHO'S WE?
I'M PART OF AN ORGANIZED EFFORT TO COUNTER THE DEMONIC INVASION OF OUR WORLD. WE ARE, FOR LACK OF A BETTER TITLE, HEAVEN'S MILITIA.
YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING ME.
YOUR WAY OF DOING THINGS DIDN'T WORK. WE ALL KNOW WHAT A DISASTER THE PROTECTORATE TURNED OUT TO BE.
THAT'S LOW... EVEN FOR YOU. THEY WERE GOOD MEN FIGHTING FOR A RIGHTEOUS CAUSE.
THEY ALSO SPAWNED THE BOLABOGG CULT.

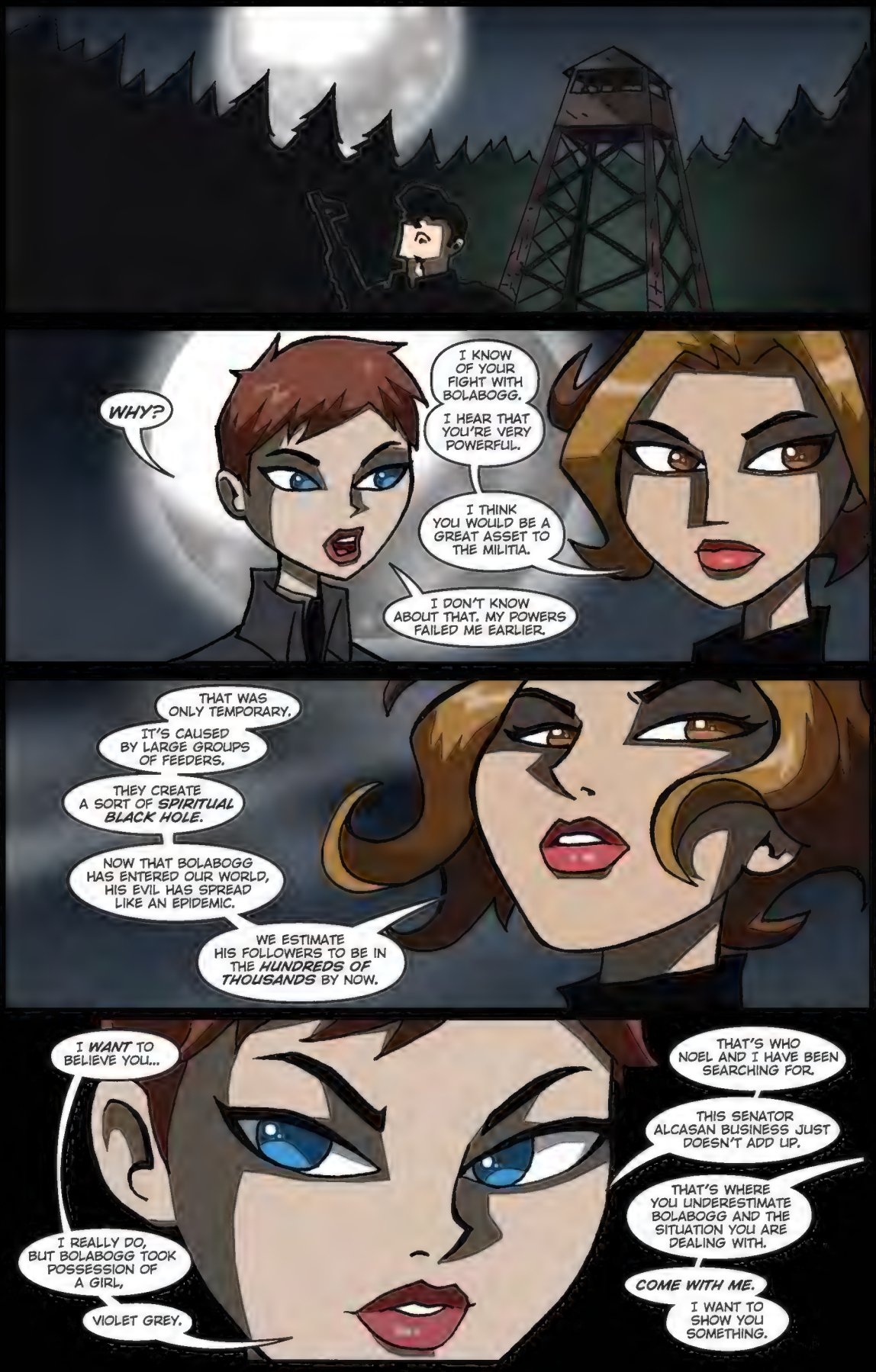

BOLABOGG WOULD HAVE FOUND A WAY OUT OF HELL *WITH* OR *WITHOUT* PITCH'S HELP.
MAYBE. BUT WE CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO SIT AND FIGHT A DEFENSIVE WAR. WE HAVE TO TAKE THE FIGHT TO THEM IF WE EXPECT TO WIN.
JUST WHAT DO YOU PLAN ON DOING THAT WE HAVEN'T ALREADY DONE?
NARA AND I HAVE SPENT *WEEKS* HUNTING BOLABOGG-
EXACTLY. WHILE YOU TWO WERE OUT CHASING YOUR OWN TAILS, BOLABOGG WAS ABLE TO IMPLEMENT THE *NEXT PHASE* OF HIS INVASION.
bwee doo beep
YEAH? OKAY. GOT IT.
...NEW DEVELOPMENT IN THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON SENATOR *VICTOR ALCASAN.*
POLICE HAVE DISCOVERED GRAFFITTI ON A ROOFTOP WHERE THEY BELIEVE THE ASSASSIN MAY HAVE FIRED FROM.
THE MARKINGS MATCH THOSE OF RELIGIOUS EXTREMIST GROUP, *HEAVEN'S MILITIA,* WHO HAVE NOW MOVED TO THE TOP OF THE SUSPECT LIST.
SENATOR ALCASAN REMAINS IN *CRITICAL CONDITION-*

YOU'RE THE ONE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS? HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MIND?
YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND.
YOU TRIED TO MURDER A U.S. SENATOR, AND A CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT, NO LESS!
IT HAD TO BE DONE.
WHY? SO YOU CAN TRY AND RECLAIM SOME OF YOUR FORMER GLORY BY STARTING ANOTHER REVOLUTION?
AND HERE I THOUGHT YOU WERE ACTUALLY INTERESTED IN TAKING DOWN BOLABOGG.
DON'T YOU GET IT?!
VICTOR ALCASAN IS BOLABOGG!!

CHAPTER 2

ELIJAH...
...WE NEED TO TALK.
HEAVEN'S MILITIA H.Q.
SO, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

IMPRESSIVE.
BUT...?
I STILL DON'T SEE WHAT YOUR STAKE IN ALL THIS IS.
WHY ARE YOU IN THIS FIGHT?
I'VE BEEN IN THIS "FIGHT" LONG BEFORE YOU WERE BORN.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
ARE YOU...?
ONE OF THE RESURRECTED?
YES.
AND I'M READY TO END THIS WAR.
WHAT ABOUT THE OTHERS IN YOUR GROUP?
NO, I'M THE ONLY ONE.
THE REST ARE JUST GOOD MEN THAT RECOGNIZE THE EVIL WE'RE UP AGAINST.
I HAVE TO BE HONEST WITH YOU.
I PURPOSELY SOUGHT YOU OUT.


WHY?
I KNOW OF YOUR FIGHT WITH BOLABOGG.
I HEAR THAT YOU'RE VERY POWERFUL.
I THINK YOU WOULD BE A GREAT ASSET TO THE MILITIA.
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THAT. MY POWERS FAILED ME EARLIER.
THAT WAS ONLY TEMPORARY.
IT'S CAUSED BY LARGE GROUPS OF FEEDERS.
THEY CREATE A SORT OF *SPIRITUAL BLACK HOLE.*
NOW THAT BOLABOGG HAS ENTERED OUR WORLD, HIS EVIL HAS SPREAD LIKE AN EPIDEMIC.
WE ESTIMATE HIS FOLLOWERS TO BE IN THE *HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS* BY NOW.
I *WANT* TO BELIEVE YOU...
I REALLY DO, BUT BOLABOGG TOOK POSSESSION OF A GIRL,
VIOLET GREY.
THAT'S WHO NOEL AND I HAVE BEEN SEARCHING FOR.
THIS SENATOR ALCASAN BUSINESS JUST DOESN'T ADD UP.
THAT'S WHERE YOU UNDERESTIMATE BOLABOGG AND THE SITUATION YOU ARE DEALING WITH.
COME WITH ME.
I WANT TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING.

MAYBE THIS WILL HELP TO CONVINCE YOU.
VIOLET!

SHE'S BASICALLY *BRAIN DEAD*... A VEGETABLE.
HOW'D THIS HAPPEN?
WE FOUND HER ABOUT 2 MONTHS AGO, WANDERING AROUND A TRUCKSTOP IN ARIZONA, OBVIOUSLY HEAVILY TRAUMATIZED.
UPON FURTHER EXAMINATION, WE FOUND THAT SHE HAD RECENTLY *GIVEN BIRTH.*
WHAT? HOW IS THAT POSSIBLE?
BOLABOGG WASN'T JUST SEEKING TO POSSESS SOMEONE, NARA, HIS GOAL WAS TO OBTAIN A BODY OF HIS OWN - *TO BECOME FLESH.*
IF YOU HADN'T RESISTED HIM, IT WOULD BE YOU LAYING HERE INSTEAD OF VIOLET.
EVEN IF THAT'S TRUE, HOW DOES A NEWBORN CHILD BECOME A SENATOR IN JUST A FEW SHORT MONTHS?
DON'T FORGET WHO AND WHAT YOU'RE DEALING WITH, NARA.
BOLABOGG IS A DEMON OF INCREDIBLE POWER AND CUNNING.
HE WAS ABLE TO ACCELERATE HIS GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT PRACTICALLY OVERNIGHT.
FROM WHAT WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO GATHER, HE THEN MURDERED THE REAL ALCASAN AND ASSUMED HIS IDENTITY.
THAT'S *SOME* THEORY.
VIOLET...*VIOLET?* CAN YOU HEAR ME?
WE'VE TRIED EVERYTHING.
WHATEVER HE DID TO HER, SHE WON'T BE COMING OUT OF IT.

THERE'S ONE OTHER THING I NEED TO KNOW.
IN THE CAR EARLIER, YOU CALLED ME NARA RADDEMER.
CARE TO EXPLAIN?
THAT'S SOMETHING I'LL LEAVE TO NOEL.
ELIJAH...
ELIJAH,
PLEASE SAY SOMETHING.
OH, BOY.
BESIDES THAT...YOU'VE SAID "OH BOY" 10 TIMES NOW.

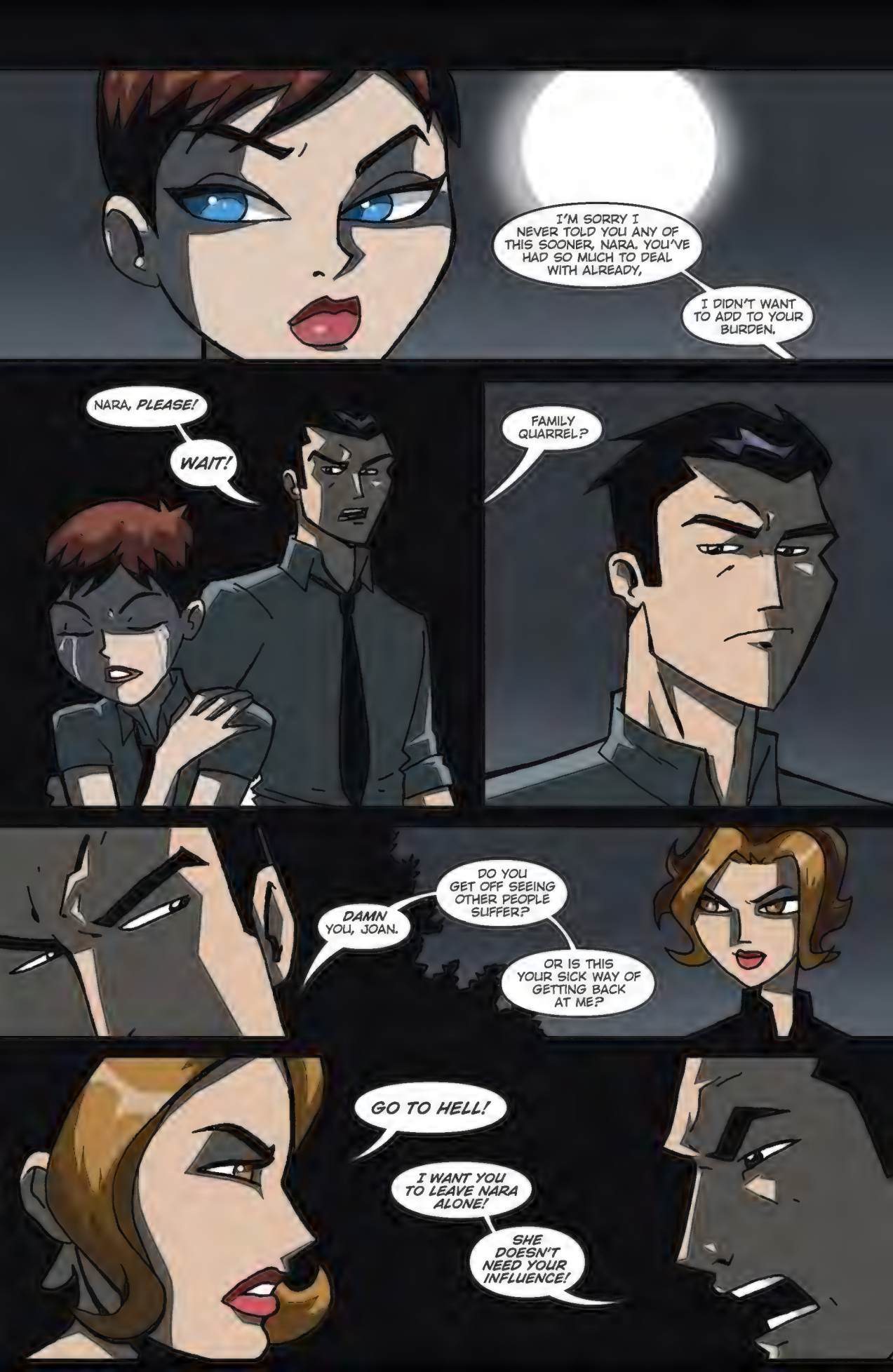
I DON'T THINK I'M READY FOR THIS.
WELL, MAYBE YOU SHOULD HAVE THOUGHT OF THAT BEFORE –
I KNOW...
I KNOW.
COME HERE...
LISTEN... YOU KNOW I LOVE YOU, HAZY.
YOU MEAN THE WORLD TO ME.
AND EVEN THOUGH WE MADE A MISTAKE, I WANT TO DO THE RIGHT THING.
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?
I THINK WE SHOULD GET MARRIED.
WHAT?

WE BOTH KNOW WHAT IT'S LIKE TO GROW UP IN BROKEN HOMES
MY DAD WAS *NEVER* THERE FOR ME.
I SWORE I WOULD NEVER BE THAT WAY - THAT I WOULD NEVER RUN OUT ON MY KIDS.
WHAT? WHAT IS IT?
ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU WANTED TO HEAR?
I DON'T KNOW.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN YOU DON'T KNOW?
I'M AFRAID.
I DON'T KNOW HOW TO BE A MOTHER. IT'S NOT LIKE I HAD A GOOD ROLE MODEL.
I KNOW, BUT WE'LL HAVE EACH OTHER.
WE CAN DO THIS.
IT'S MORE THAN THAT.
AFTER ALL WE'VE BEEN THROUGH IN THE PAST YEAR, THE EVIL WE'VE SEEN...
...LOSING MOM AND SIMON, WHAT IF *SOMETHING HAPPENED* TO THE BABY?
I COULDN'T TAKE IT, ELIJAH
I'VE LOST EVERYONE I'VE EVER CARED ABOUT. I JUST NEED SOME TIME TO THINK.
ALRIGHT.
BUT PLEASE CONSIDER WHAT I SAID.
I WANT US TO BE TOGETHER.
I KNOW.

SO, HOW'D THE BRAINWASHING GO?
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WE NEED TO GET OUT OF HERE, NARA.
THESE PEOPLE ARE DANGEROUS. IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THE FBI IS SWARMING THIS PLACE.
WHAT IF SHE'S TELLING THE TRUTH?
LISTEN, NARA.
I'VE KNOWN JOAN A LONG TIME. SHE'S ALWAYS BEEN A BIT OF AN EXTREMIST, ALWAYS PLANNING HER NEXT BIG CONQUEST.
NOTHING GOOD CAN COME FROM THIS.
NOEL, VIOLET IS HERE.
WHAT?
SHE'S IN SOME KIND OF SHOCK.
BUT SHE'S NOT CARRYING BOLABOGG ANYMORE. I LOOKED INTO HER EYES...SOMETHING HAPPENED TO HER.

I DON'T LIKE THIS, NARA.
I DON'T TRUST THESE PEOPLE.
NOEL, WAIT!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
WE'RE LEAVING.
NOEL....
I NEED TO KNOW THE TRUTH.
ARE YOU MY FATHER?
WHAT?
YOU HEARD ME!
NO MORE GAMES!
ARE YOU MY FATHER?
NO... I'M NOT.
THEN WHY ALL THE SECRECY?
WHY HAVEN'T YOU EVER GIVEN ME A STRAIGHT ANSWER?
FOR ONCE CAN'T YOU JUST BE COMPLETELY HONEST WITH ME?!
I'M NOT YOUR FATHER.
I WISH I WERE...
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

YOUR MOTHER, YOUR REAL MOTHER, SARA, WAS MY WIFE.
SHORTLY AFTER WE WERE MARRIED, SHE BECAME PREGNANT. IT SEEMED LIKE A MIRACLE - I FOUND OUT LONG AGO THAT I WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO HAVE CHILDREN.
BUT THE TRUTH CAME OUT.
SARA ADMITTED TO HAVING AN AFFAIR. I'LL SPARE YOU THE DETAILS, BUT IN THE END, WE WERE ABLE TO WORK THINGS OUT AND I FORGAVE HER.
I LOVED SARA SO MUCH THAT I WANTED TO RAISE YOU AS MY OWN.
AFTER YOU WERE BORN, AND THE TRUTH ABOUT YOUR FUTURE GOT OUT, YOUR MOTHER WAS TORN IN TWO. SHE DIDN'T WANT TO SEE YOU BECOME A PAWN. I WOKE UP ONE MORNING TO FIND YOU BOTH GONE.
TWO WEEKS LATER I RECEIVED A PHONE CALL FROM HER, TELLING ME THAT YOU TWO WERE OKAY. SHE SAID SHE WAS SORRY, BUT SHE DID IT TO PROTECT YOU.
I DIDN'T HEAR FROM HER AGAIN FOR 15 YEARS. SHE CALLED TO TELL ME THAT SHE WAS DYING. SHE TOLD ME WHERE TO FIND YOU AND ASKED ME TO WATCH OVER YOU.
I PROMISED HER I WOULD.


I'M SORRY I NEVER TOLD YOU ANY OF THIS SOONER, NARA. YOU'VE HAD SO MUCH TO DEAL WITH ALREADY,
I DIDN'T WANT TO ADD TO YOUR BURDEN.
NARA, PLEASE!
WAIT!
FAMILY QUARREL?
DAMN YOU, JOAN.
DO YOU GET OFF SEEING OTHER PEOPLE SUFFER?
OR IS THIS YOUR SICK WAY OF GETTING BACK AT ME?
GO TO HELL!
I WANT YOU TO LEAVE NARA ALONE!
SHE DOESN'T NEED YOUR INFLUENCE!

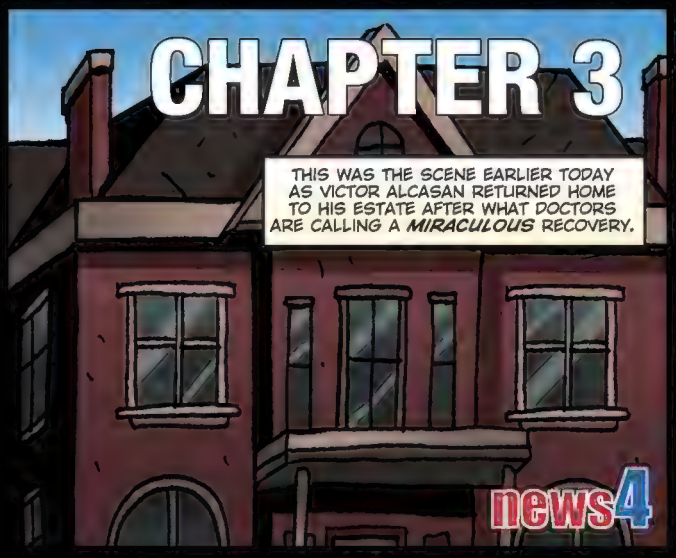
MY INFLUENCE?
IT'S BECAUSE OF YOU AND YOUR INTERFERENCE THAT BOLABOGG HAS GOTTEN AS FAR AS HE HAS.
YOU'RE HOLDING HER BACK!
I KNOW WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT, BUT WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN US IS IN THE PAST.
DON'T DRAG HER THROUGH IT.
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT YOU DID TO ME?
I WAS READY TO GIVE UP EVERYTHING FOR YOU.
I LOVED YOU, NOEL, AND YOU JUST TOSSED ME ASIDE LIKE GARBAGE.
FOR HER!
LEAVE SARA OUT OF THIS.
DID IT EVER OCCUR TO YOU THAT MAYBE THE REASON SHE STRAYED WAS BECAUSE YOU HAD IT COMING?
SHUT UP!
YOU GOING TO HIT ME, NOEL?

GOODBYE, JOAN.
NARA...
I JUST WANT TO BE ALONE FOR A WHILE.
I UNDERSTAND.

HEY, BUDDY.
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
THUNK!

WESTERN MEDICAL CENTER, DENVER, COLORADO.
SIR! YOU'RE OUT OF BED!
IT'S ALRIGHT, JAMES.
YOU'VE... RECOVERED?

OF COURSE. DID YOU REALLY DOUBT THAT I WOULD?


CHAPTER 3
THIS WAS THE SCENE EARLIER TODAY AS VICTOR ALCASAN RETURNED HOME TO HIS ESTATE AFTER WHAT DOCTORS ARE CALLING A *MIRACULOUS* RECOVERY.
news4

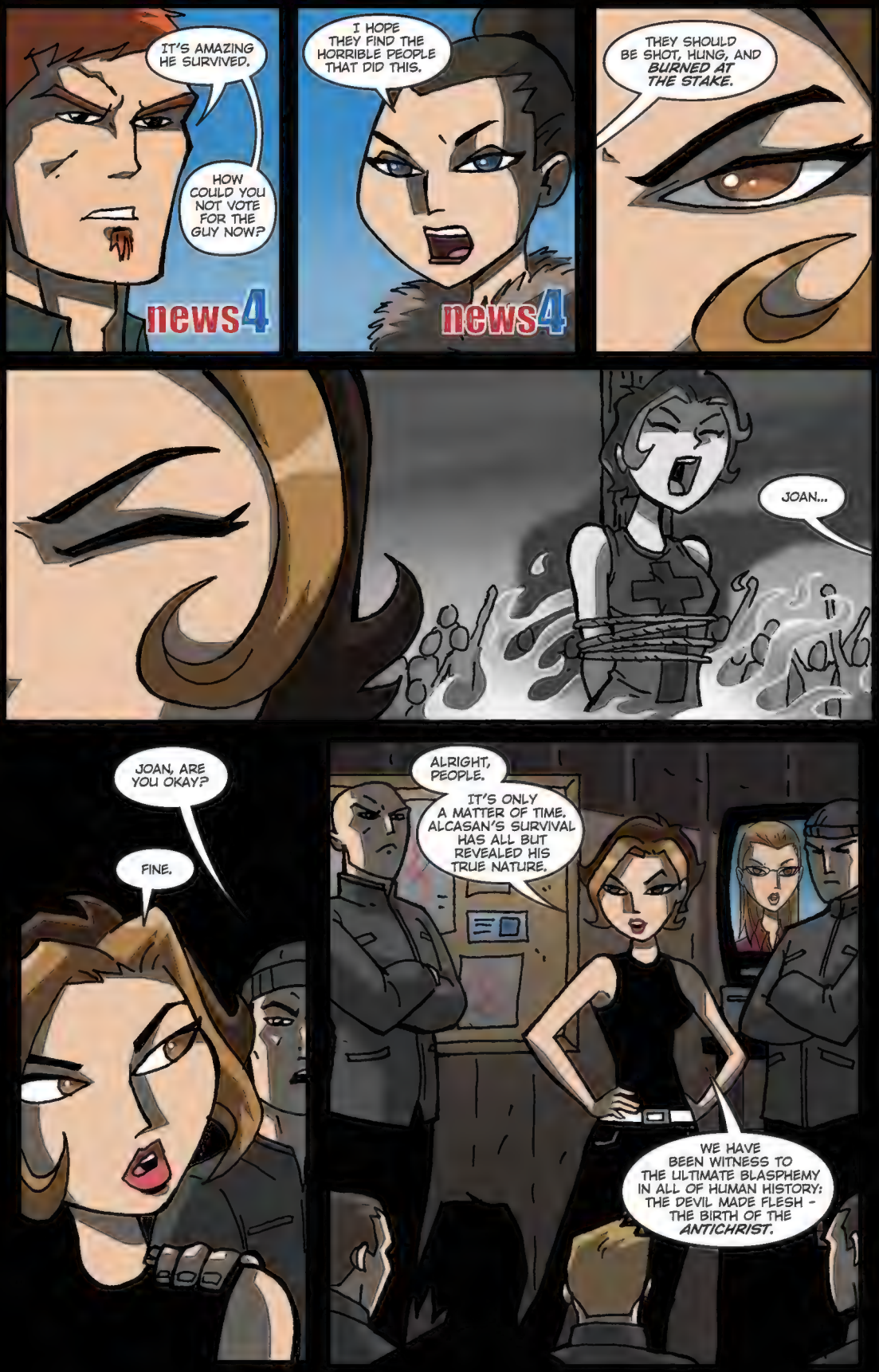
THE SENATOR WAS SHOT LAST TUESDAY IN AN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT BY SUSPECTED RELIGIOUS EXTREMIST GROUP *HEAVEN'S MILITIA.*
JAMES FREEHORN, THE SENATOR'S PERSONAL ADVISOR, HAD THIS TO SAY TO REPORTERS.

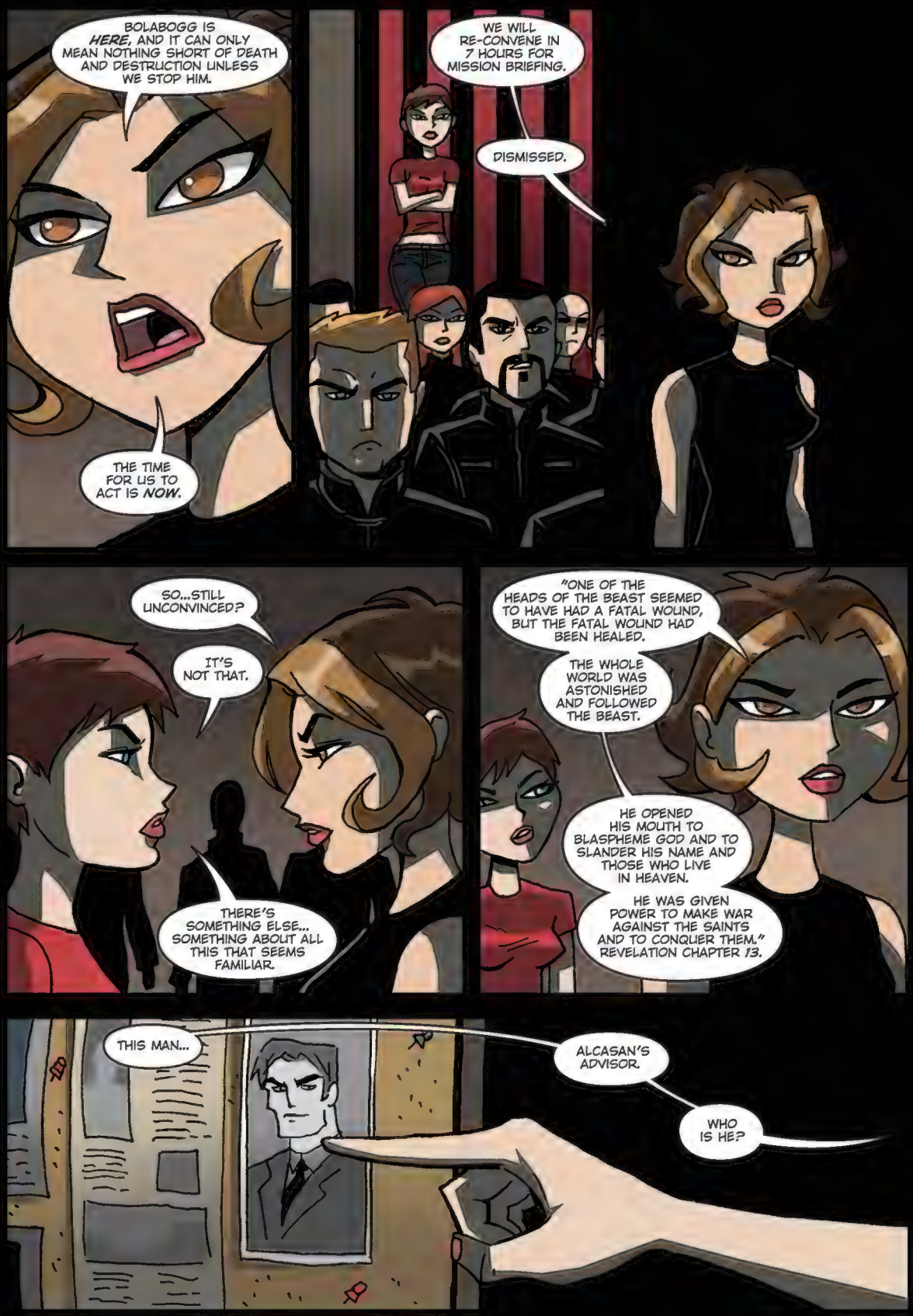
SENATOR ALCASAN SENDS HIS GRATITUDE FOR ALL THE SUPPORT AND PRAYERS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.
HE IS RECOVERING WELL AND IS GLAD TO BE RETURNING HOME.
HE WANTS THE PEOPLE TO KNOW THAT THIS TRAGIC AND HEINOUS ACT WILL NOT DETER HIM FROM HIS VISION.
HIS CAMPAIGN FOR PRESIDENT WILL CONTINUE.

HE HAS ASKED ME TO READ TO YOU THIS HANDWRITTEN STATEMENT:
DESPITE THIS SETBACK, I AM NOW MORE DETERMINED THAN EVER TO REACH MY GOAL - TO BRING A NEW VOICE TO THIS GREAT NATION. THE CURRENT ADMINISTRATION WOULD HAVE YOU BELIEVE THAT TERROR IS ABROAD.
BUT I SAY DIFFERENTLY. THE REAL TERROR IS *HERE,* IN OUR OWN BACKYARD, IN THE FORM OF FANATICAL RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM.
THESE PURVEYORS OF HATE AND BIGOTRY WILL NO LONGER BE SAFE TO PRACTICE THEIR INTOLERANCE SHOULD I EMERGE VICTORIOUS THIS NOVEMBER.
AND I *WILL* BE VICTORIOUS.

WE WENT TO PEOPLE ON THE STREET FOR THEIR REACTIONS.
news4

I'M *SO* RELIEVED HE'S OKAY.
HE'S A TRUE INSPIRATION.
news4

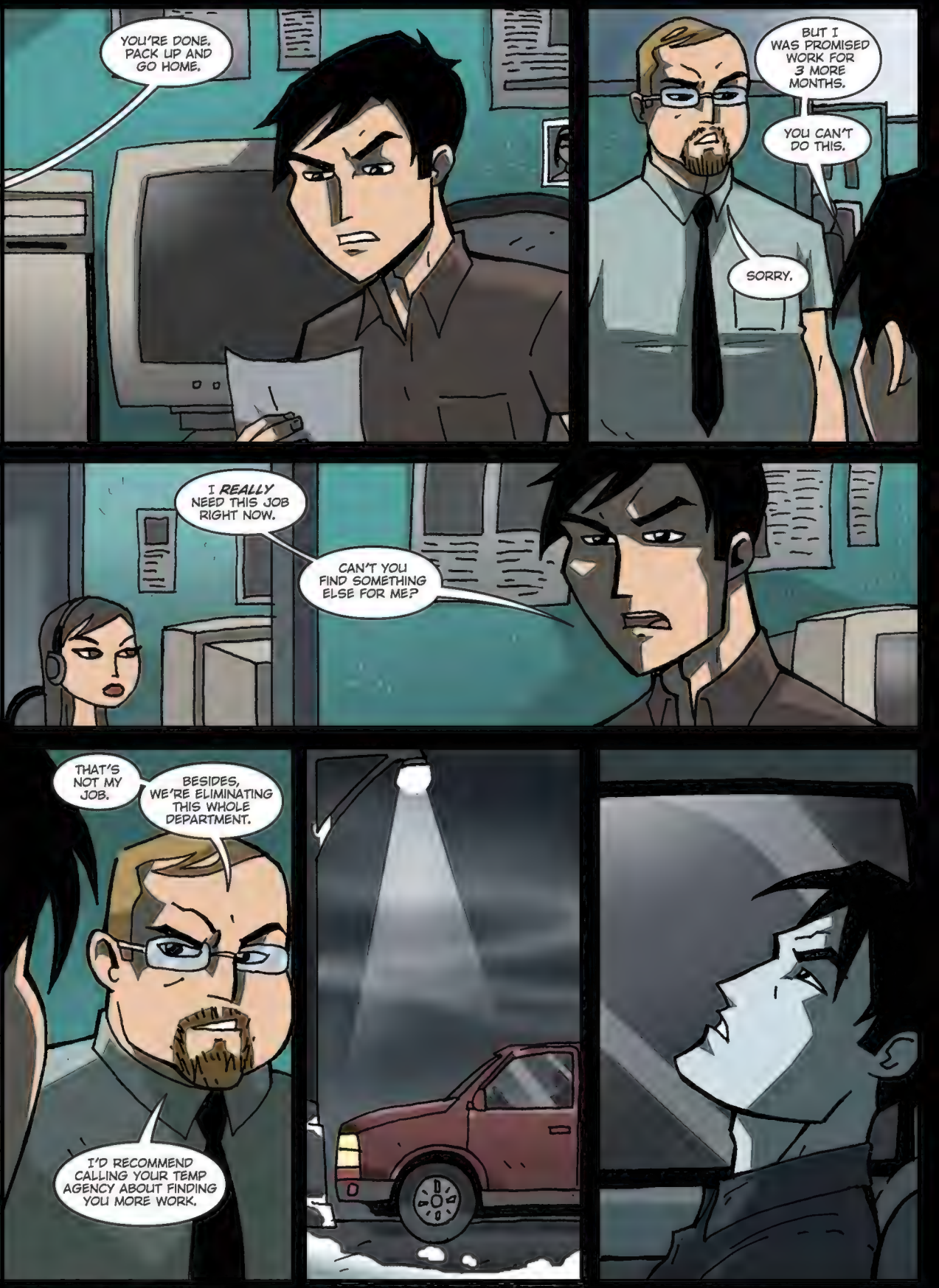

IT'S AMAZING HE SURVIVED.
HOW COULD YOU NOT VOTE FOR THE GUY NOW?
news4
I HOPE THEY FIND THE HORRIBLE PEOPLE THAT DID THIS.
news4
THEY SHOULD BE SHOT, HUNG, AND BURNED AT THE STAKE.
JOAN...
JOAN, ARE YOU OKAY?
FINE.
ALRIGHT, PEOPLE.
IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME. ALCASAN'S SURVIVAL HAS ALL BUT REVEALED HIS TRUE NATURE.
WE HAVE BEEN WITNESS TO THE ULTIMATE BLASPHEMY IN ALL OF HUMAN HISTORY: THE DEVIL MADE FLESH - THE BIRTH OF THE ANTICHRIST.


BOLABOGG IS HERE, AND IT CAN ONLY MEAN NOTHING SHORT OF DEATH AND DESTRUCTION UNLESS WE STOP HIM.
THE TIME FOR US TO ACT IS NOW.
WE WILL RE-CONVENE IN 7 HOURS FOR MISSION BRIEFING.
DISMISSED.
SO...STILL UNCONVINCED?
IT'S NOT THAT.
THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE... SOMETHING ABOUT ALL THIS THAT SEEMS FAMILIAR.
"ONE OF THE HEADS OF THE BEAST SEEMED TO HAVE HAD A FATAL WOUND, BUT THE FATAL WOUND HAD BEEN HEALED.
THE WHOLE WORLD WAS ASTONISHED AND FOLLOWED THE BEAST.
HE OPENED HIS MOUTH TO BLASPHEME GOD AND TO SLANDER HIS NAME AND THOSE WHO LIVE IN HEAVEN.
HE WAS GIVEN POWER TO MAKE WAR AGAINST THE SAINTS AND TO CONQUER THEM." REVELATION CHAPTER 13.
THIS MAN...
ALCASAN'S ADVISOR.
WHO IS HE?

JAMES FREEHORN.
WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT IF I TOLD YOU HE WAS ONCE A MEMBER OF THE PROTECTORATE?
WHY AM I NOT SURPRISED?
HE WAS ONCE CONNECTED WITH ABRAHAM PITCH'S SPLINTER GROUP, BUT THERE WAS SOME SORT OF FALLING OUT, AND THEY PARTED WAYS.
FOR YEARS HE PRACTICALLY VANISHED UNTIL SHOWING UP SEVERAL MONTHS AGO AS ALCASAN'S PERSONAL ADVISOR.
WHY?
WE'RE NOT ENTIRELY SURE.
BOY?
BOY, YOU ALRIGHT?

YOU GONNA MISS YOUR BUS.
BUS? HOW'D I GET HERE?
BUS STOP
DON'T KNOW.
JUST THOUGHT I'D STOP AN' MAKE SURE YOU WEREN'T DEAD.
I NEED YOUR TRUCK.
THOMAS, HAVE YOU SEEN RADDEMER?
CAN THIS WAIT?
I'M KINDA IN THE MIDDLE OF A TRAINING EXERCISE RIGHT NOW.

WHERE IS HE?
HOW SHOULD I KNOW?
DON'T JERK ME AROUND, THOMAS!
YOU'VE BEEN SKATING ON THIN ICE AS IT IS.
WHERE IS HE?
HE WAS TROUBLE.
NO ONE WANTED HIM HERE.
I THOUGHT I WAS DOING US A FAVOR.
WHAT DID YOU DO?
RELAX.
HE'S NOT DEAD. HE'S JUST GOING TO WAKE UP WITH A NASTY HEADACHE.
YOU'RE CONFINED TO QUARTERS FOR THE REST OF THE DAY.
I'LL DECIDE YOUR PUNISHMENT LATER.
VANDELAY INDUSTRIES, INC.
DARLINGTON HILLS DIVISION
812 ARAN WAY P.O. 2003
andelay Industries, Inc. appreciates your hard
work, but at this time it has been determined
your services are no longer needed.
Management
WHAT IS THIS?


YOU'RE DONE. PACK UP AND GO HOME.
BUT I WAS PROMISED WORK FOR 3 MORE MONTHS.
YOU CAN'T DO THIS.
SORRY.
I *REALLY* NEED THIS JOB RIGHT NOW.
CAN'T YOU FIND SOMETHING ELSE FOR ME?
THAT'S NOT MY JOB.
BESIDES, WE'RE ELIMINATING THIS WHOLE DEPARTMENT.
I'D RECOMMEND CALLING YOUR TEMP AGENCY ABOUT FINDING YOU MORE WORK.

WHERE IS HAZY?

HAZY!
OH MY GOD!
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
WE NEED TO TALK.
LEAVE NOW BEFORE I CALL THE POLICE!
PLEASE...
...JUST HEAR ME OUT.
DON'T YOU GET IT?
WE WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE!
IT'S ABOUT NARA.

NARA.
MISSION BRIEFING IS ABOUT TO START.
I'D LIKE YOU TO BE THERE.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
WHY DID HE LEAVE?
I WAS UPSET AT HIM, BUT NOT FOR THE REASONS HE THOUGHT.
I HAD REALLY HOPED HE WAS MY FATHER.
EVERYTHING WOULD HAVE MADE MORE SENSE.
HE'S BEEN MY ANCHOR THROUGH EVERYTHING... ESPECIALLY AFTER LOSING MY FAMILY,
MY FRIENDS.
I FEEL LIKE I'VE LOST EVERYONE I'VE EVER CARED ABOUT.
I'VE NEVER FELT MORE ALONE.

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE GOING THROUGH. *BELIEVE* ME, I'VE EXPERIENCED THOSE SAME EMOTIONS PROBABLY *HUNDREDS* OF TIMES. UNFORTUNATELY THAT'S THE NATURE OF OUR CALLING. IT'S A DAILY STRUGGLE OF FLESH VS. SPIRIT. AND IT'S A STRUGGLE WE OFTEN FACE ALONE.
WE ARE NOT OF THIS WORLD, NARA. WE ARE *OUTSIDERS* - THE LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS. NEVER LOSE SIGHT OF THAT. THIS WORLD IS *DESTINED* FOR FIRE AND WRATH. BUT WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE. WE CAN DO OUR PART TO HASTEN THE DAY WHEN ALL WILL BE REBORN INTO SOMETHING NEW.
BUT IT WILL NOT HAPPEN UNLESS WE ACT... UNLESS WE FIGHT BACK AGAINST THE EVIL THAT THREATENS IT.

I'LL GIVE YOU SOME TIME TO THINK. BUT I HOPE YOU'LL JOIN US. YOUR DESTINY IS FAR GREATER THAN FAMILY, THAN RADDEMER, EVEN GREATER THAN MYSELF AND THE MILITIA.
ONCE YOU ACCEPT THAT, EVERYTHING WILL BE MADE CLEAR TO YOU.
?

MALACHI!
I CANNOT HELP YOU.
WHAT? THEN WHY ARE YOU HERE?
IT WAS YOU THAT SUMMONED ME.
I DID? OKAY. WELL IF THAT'S THE CASE, THEN WHILE I'VE GOT YOU-
I CANNOT HELP YOU.
LOOK, I'M FACING A PRETTY BIG DECISION HERE. DON'T YOU THINK IT'S IN YOUR INTEREST THAT I GET THIS ONE RIGHT?
DO I HELP THESE PEOPLE, WHO MAY OR MAY NOT BE COMPELTELY INSANE, TAKE DOWN A UNITED STATES SENATOR?
OR DO I GET THE HELL OUT OF HERE, FIND NOEL, AND DO SOMETHING - ANYTHING ELSE?
OKAY. I GET IT. YOU'RE NOT GOING TO HELP ME. FINE. HAVE IT YOUR WAY.
BUT IF YOU LEAVE THIS TO ME AND IT ALL GOES TO HELL, THAT'S ON YOU.
NO. YOU AND YOU ALONE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR ACTIONS.

YOU HAVE ALREADY BEEN EQUIPPED WITH ALL THAT YOU NEED.
YOU WERE RAISED IN TRUTH AND WISDOM. YOU HAVE THE LOVE AND LOYALTY OF YOUR FRIENDS. AND YOU HAVE THE FOUNDATION AND GUIDANCE OF YOUR FAITH. WOULD YOU HAVE *ALL* OF THAT BE FOR NOTHING?
RELY ON THE GIFTS YOU HAVE ALREADY BEEN GIVEN, AND DESPAIR *NO MORE.*
GODSPEED, NARA.
IT'S HEADED FOR DISASTER... *ALL OF IT.* THE MILITIA IS IN WAY OVER THEIR HEADS.

I STILL DON'T SEE HOW THIS CONCERNS US.
I CAME TO YOU OUT OF CONCERN FOR NARA. HER INVOLVEMENT WITH THE GROUP WILL EITHER LEAD TO HER EXPOSURE TO THE WORLD... OR WORSE.
BUT NARA'S POWERFUL. SHE CAN'T BE KILLED, RIGHT. SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?
THE PROBLEM IS YOUR CONTINUED IGNORANCE IN THE FACE OF ALL YOU'VE SEEN. SINCE THE DAY NARA WAS RESURRECTED BOTH OF YOU WERE INEXPLICABLY LINKED TO HER DESTINY.
YOU STILL HAVE PARTS TO PLAY IN ALL THIS. I'M PLEADING WITH YOU BOTH TO HELP ME. HELP ME GET HER BACK.
IF SHE WOULDN'T LISTEN TO YOU, WHY WILL SHE LISTEN TO US?
SHE STILL CARES FOR YOU TWO. SHE HASN'T BEEN THE SAME SINCE SHE LEFT. BESIDES, I'VE MADE SOME MISTAKES. I MAY BE THE LAST PERSON SHE TRUSTS RIGHT NOW.
SO, BECAUSE OF YOUR MISTAKES, WE HAVE TO RISK OUR LIVES? THAT'S CRAP. WE'RE NOT DOING IT.
YES, WE ARE.
WHAT?

ELIJAH, STOP BEING AN ASS AND SHUT UP! WEREN'T YOU THE ONE JUST LECTURING ME ON DOING THE RIGHT THING?
NARA IS THE BEST FRIEND I'VE EVER HAD AND IT WAS WRONG OF ME TO TURN MY BACK ON HER. I COULDN'T LIVE WITH MYSELF IF SOMETHING HAPPENED TO HER.
HAZY, YOU'RE BEING IRRATIONAL. WHAT ABOUT THE BABY?
I'M GOING, WITH OR WITHOUT YOU.
MATTHEWS, KING... YOU TWO WILL SET UP HERE.

SULLIVAN, YOU WILL -
THAT'S NOT GOING TO WORK. THEY'LL HAVE A LEAST A HALF DOZEN FEEDERS AT THAT GATE ALONE.
IF THAT GATE ISN'T SECURED, WE MIGHT AS WELL CALL THE WHOLE THING OFF.
AM I INTERRUPTING?
NARA. COME IN. WE'RE GOING OVER THE ATTACK PLAN NOW.
I HAVE AN IDEA.

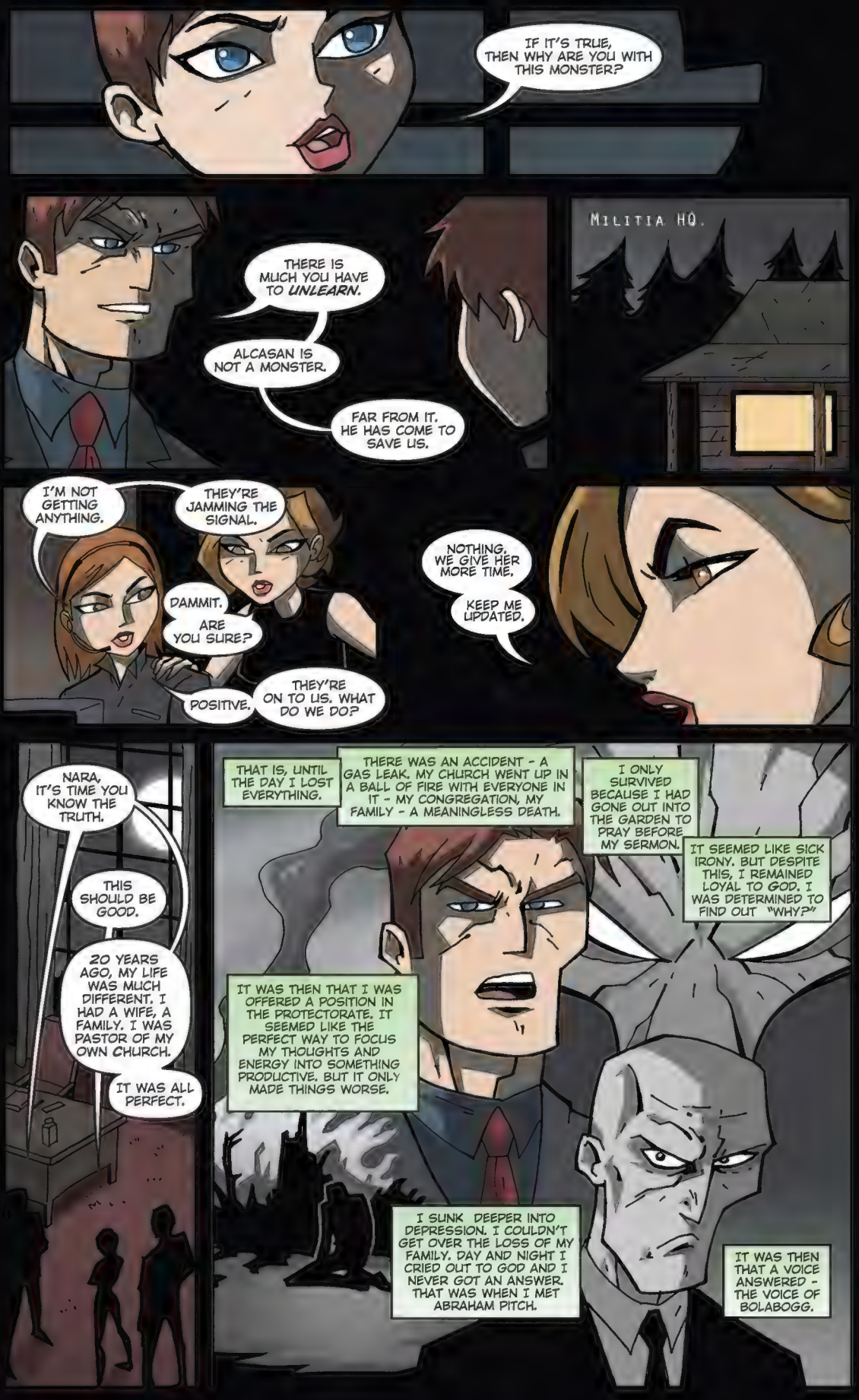
OKAY. I'VE MADE IT TO THE GATE. I CAN ALREADY FEEL THE EFFECTS OF THE FEEDERS.
NARA, ARE YOU *SURE* ABOUT THIS? YOU CAN STILL BACK OUT. WE CAN FIND ANOTHER WAY.
I'M SURE, IF I DO THIS, WE CAN TAKE DOWN BOLABOGG WITHOUT ANY MORE LOSS OF LIFE. YOUR MEN WILL BE SAFE. THE WORLD WILL BE SAFE.
HEY, YOU!

FREEZE!

Thursday 19th, 8:47 P.M.
Death.
I've seen more than any girl my age should. I've never kept a journal or a diary.
I always felt it was kind of childish to be honest. But today.. today feels different.
I feel like I have to get my thoughts out. Maybe it's the sense of urgency, of not knowing what we're getting into.
In the course of a year, I lost everyone I loved - my mom, my brother, and my best friend.
Sometimes it felt like the only sensible thing to do would've been to end it all.
Why wait for fate when it seemed like it was only a matter of time until my number was up?
It's those feelings that make me afraid for the life growing inside me.
What's the point?
Will it just be born to die?

Were we all?
CHAPTER 4
AHH...NARA!
COME IN!
SO GOOD TO SEE YOU!

YOU SEEM TO BE RECOVERING NICELY.
YES, IT'S *QUITE* MIRACULOUS. THE DOCTORS ARE STUNNED.
YOU MEAN *DECEIVED*.
LET'S NOT GET NASTY. SURELY WE CAN BE CIVILIZED ABOUT THIS.
I DIDN'T COME HERE TO BE CIVIL. I CAME HERE TO *KILL* YOU.
AND WHO SENT YOU? RADDEMER? *THE MILITIA*?
FOR SOMEONE WHO FOUGHT SO HARD TO RESIST ME, I FIND IT IRONIC THAT YOU SO WILLINGLY LET YOURSELF BECOME A PUPPET FOR THE OTHER SIDE.
SPOKEN LIKE A TRUE DEVIL.
WELL, BEFORE YOU BRING *FIRE AND DAMNATION* UPON ME, THERE'S SOMEONE I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET.
NARA, MEET JAMES FREEHORN. MY PERSONAL ADVISOR... AND *YOUR FATHER*.
HELLO, NARA. IT'S SO GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN.
YOU EXPECT ME TO BELIEVE THIS?
WHAT'S SO IMPOSSIBLE ABOUT IT? DOESN'T IT ANSWER EVERY LINGERING QUESTION YOU HAVE?


IF IT'S TRUE, THEN WHY ARE YOU WITH THIS MONSTER?
THERE IS MUCH YOU HAVE TO UNLEARN.
ALCASAN IS NOT A MONSTER.
FAR FROM IT. HE HAS COME TO SAVE US.
MILITIA HQ.
I'M NOT GETTING ANYTHING.
THEY'RE JAMMING THE SIGNAL.
DAMMIT.
ARE YOU SURE?
POSITIVE.
THEY'RE ON TO US. WHAT DO WE DO?
NOTHING. WE GIVE HER MORE TIME.
KEEP ME UPDATED.
NARA, IT'S TIME YOU KNOW THE TRUTH.
THIS SHOULD BE GOOD.
20 YEARS AGO, MY LIFE WAS MUCH DIFFERENT. I HAD A WIFE, A FAMILY. I WAS PASTOR OF MY OWN CHURCH.
IT WAS ALL PERFECT.
THAT IS, UNTIL THE DAY I LOST EVERYTHING.
THERE WAS AN ACCIDENT - A GAS LEAK. MY CHURCH WENT UP IN A BALL OF FIRE WITH EVERYONE IN IT - MY CONGREGATION, MY FAMILY - A MEANINGLESS DEATH.
I ONLY SURVIVED BECAUSE I HAD GONE OUT INTO THE GARDEN TO PRAY BEFORE MY SERMON.
IT SEEMED LIKE SICK IRONY. BUT DESPITE THIS, I REMAINED LOYAL TO GOD. I WAS DETERMINED TO FIND OUT "WHY?"
IT WAS THEN THAT I WAS OFFERED A POSITION IN THE PROTECTORATE. IT SEEMED LIKE THE PERFECT WAY TO FOCUS MY THOUGHTS AND ENERGY INTO SOMETHING PRODUCTIVE. BUT IT ONLY MADE THINGS WORSE.
I SUNK DEEPER INTO DEPRESSION. I COULDN'T GET OVER THE LOSS OF MY FAMILY. DAY AND NIGHT I CRIED OUT TO GOD AND I NEVER GOT AN ANSWER. THAT WAS WHEN I MET ABRAHAM PITCH.
IT WAS THEN THAT A VOICE ANSWERED - THE VOICE OF BOLABOGG.

HE UNDERSTOOD MY PAIN, FOR HE TOO HAD KNOWN ABANDONMENT AT THE HANDS OF GOD. BOLABOGG MADE A *PROMISE* TO ME THAT NIGHT.
IF I WOULD GIVE HIM A CHILD, THEN I WOULD ONE DAY SIT AT HIS RIGHT HAND WHEN HE ASCENDS TO THE THRONE OF GOD.
SO THEN YOU SEDUCED MY MOTHER WITH THE SOLE PURPOSE OF GETTING HER PREGNANT.
SEDUCE IS SUCH A STRONG WORD, BUT YES.
WHAT I DIDN'T COUNT ON WAS YOUR MOTHER GETTING A HEAVENLY VISITOR TELLING HER OF YOUR *SPECIAL* NATURE.
AFTER YOU WERE BORN, PITCH THOUGHT THAT I HAD BETRAYED HIM. HE THOUGHT THAT I HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH HIDING YOU AND YOUR MOTHER.
I LEFT THE PROTECTORATE, AND DECIDED TO BIDE MY TIME, KNOWING THAT ONE DAY BOLABOGG WOULD FULFILL HIS PROMISE TO ME.
THAT'S A VERY HEARTWARMING STORY, BUT IT DOESN'T CHANGE ANYTHING.
I ONLY SERVE ONE FATHER, *ONE GOD*. I DON'T BELONG TO YOU OR BOLABOGG!
IRRELEVANT!
I *WILL* HAVE YOU AS MY BRIDE. TOGETHER WE WILL FILL THE EARTH WITH THE NEW RACE THAT WILL RISE UP IN THE *REVOLUTION* AGAINST HEAVEN.
I'VE SEEN THE FUTURE, NARA. NO ONE CAN STOP IT.
NOT *YOU*.
NOT *RADDEMER*.
NOT *THE MILITIA*.
I KNOW THEY'RE PLANNING AN ATTACK TONIGHT, AND THAT YOU'RE MERELY HERE AS A DIVERSION. THE MILITIA HAS PLAYED MY *GAME* FROM THE BEGINNING. THEY ARE JUST PIECES ON THE BOARD. IT WAS *I* WHO ALLOWED THEM TO TRY TO ASSASSINATE ME. IT WAS *I* WHO LED THEM TO ALL THE CLUES TO MY TRUE IDENTITY IN THE FIRST PLACE.
BUT NOW THEIR ROLE IN THE GAME IS UP.
YOU SEE, I'VE LEFT BEHIND A LITTLE INSURANCE POLICY.

VIOLET!
STILL WITHIN HER LIES MY ARMY, LEGION, READY TO AWAKEN.
JOAN!
ARE YOU GETTING THIS?
JOAN!
DON'T BOTHER
YOUR COMMUNICATIONS HAVE BEEN CUT OFF.
THEY WILL HAVE NO IDEA WHAT'S COMING TO THEM.

THEN IT'S A GOOD THING I BROUGHT A LITTLE INSURANCE OF MY OWN!
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
NARA, LISTEN.
THIS ISN'T NECESSARY.
LET'S TALK. I'M SURE WE CAN-

JAMES.
LEAVE US.
MONITOR THE FRONT GATE. I NEED TO SPEAK WITH YOUR DAUGHTER ALONE.
YES, SIR.
JAMES. WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
IF YOU'RE REALLY MY FATHER, HOW CAN YOU JUST LEAVE ME TO THIS MONSTER?
DOESN'T SOME PART OF YOU CARE ABOUT ME? I'M YOUR FLESH AND BLOOD!
NICE TRY.
BUT YOU WERE ALWAYS JUST A MEANS TO AN END.
NOW IT'S JUST YOU AND ME.

I WAS MERCIFUL BEFORE.
I WALKED AWAY, HOPING YOU WOULD APPRECIATE MY MERCY AND SEE THE ERROR OF YOUR WAYS.
I WON'T BE SO *KIND* THIS TIME.
UNNH!
KA-THUD!
HEH...HEH...
WHAT ARE YOU LAUGHING AT?
FROM DISEMBODIED HEAD TO TEENAGE SLUT TO POLITICIAN.
IN YOUR *DESCENDING* SCALE OF ALTERNATE FORMS, WHAT COMES NEXT? *INTESTINAL PARASITE?*
KA-THRACK

ALMOST THERE.
THAT SMOKE OVER THERE.
IS THAT IT?
WE'RE TOO LATE.
OH, GOD.
NARA!
NARA!
NARA!
JOAN!
JOAN, WHAT HAPPENED?
VIOLET...

WHERE'S NARA?
THEY HAVE HER.
GET UP.
WE NEED YOU. YOU HAVE TO TAKE US THERE.
I CAN'T... I FAILED.
JOAN, LISTEN TO ME!
WE NEED YOU!
IF YOU DON'T FIGHT NOW, WE ALL LOSE. WE NEED YOUR ABILITIES.
TAKE US TO ALCASAN!
LOOK AT YOU.
HOW PATHETIC.
THIS IS WHAT HAPPENS WHEN GOD SENDS A LITTLE GIRL TO DO HIS DIRTY WORK.
DON'T YOU SEE? HE FEARS ME!
I HAVE BEATEN HIM AT HIS OWN GAME.
I HAVE BECOME FLESH.
I AM THE NEW CHRIST!

WON'T YOU ANSWER NOW, GOD?
ANSWER ME!
I AM CHALLENGING YOU!
WILL YOU STILL REMAIN SILENT?
SIR.
ANYTHING UNUSUAL?
NO, SIR.
STAY ALERT.
THE MILITIA MAY STILL ATTEMPT TO STRIKE.
BLAM
SIR, GET DOW-
BLAM
YOU... WHY AM I NOT SURPRISED?

WHERE IS SHE?
YOU MEAN MY DAUGHTER?
SHE'S FINE.
SHE'S JUST SPENDING SOME TIME WITH ALCASAN. I THINK SHE'S STARTING TO COME AROUND TO OUR WAY OF THINKING.
ALL SHE NEEDED WAS TO GET AWAY FROM YOU.
DO YOU HEAR ME?
ANSWER ME YOU COWARD!
BOLABOGG! GOD SENDS HIS LOVE.
NO...
CLICK

BOOM
NARA!
OH. NO.
EVERYONE DROP THEIR WEAPONS OR RADDEMER EATS A BULLET.

THAT'S IT.
ANYONE FOLLOWS AND I SWEAR TO GOD I'LL BLOW HIS BRAINS OUT.
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME! FIND NARA!
WHAT DO WE DO?
SWOOOSH!
WHAT WAS THAT??
HER...
SHE'S MINE.

YOU SHOULD'VE KILLED ME THE FIRST TIME.
GAAK!
HAZY, GET BEHIND ME!
ELIJAH, WATCH OUT!
AAAHHH!
ELIJAH!!
DAMMIT!
BLAM
HOW BAD IS IT?
BEHIND YOU!?

RRUUURRAAH!
AAAAAAHHHH!
BLAM
OOF!
SMACK
I'VE WAITED A LONG TIME FOR THIS.
CRACK

WHAT WAS IT LIKE, HAVING TO LIVE WITH THOSE THOUGHTS EVERYDAY?
THOK
ME, HAVING MY WAY WITH YOUR WIFE?
SMACK
YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN IT. SHE WAS AN ANIMAL
PFT-GAAK!
YOU'D HAVE THOUGHT...SHE'D NEVER BEEN WITH A REAL MAN.
CRACK
THAT DAUGHTER OF MINE...SHE'S GONNA BE A LITTLE WHORE JUST LIKE HER MOM.
YOU GOING TO KILL ME RADDEMER? ISN'T THAT AGAINST YOUR RELIGION?
GUESS I'LL SEE YOU IN HELL.
BLAM

UUUURRRRR...
BOLABOGG!

OH, GOD...
IT IS ALMOST OVER. BOLABOGG IS WINNING.

VIOLET!
AAAAAHHH!
THIS IS FOR THE MILITIA!
KA-BLECH!
ROT IN HELL.
NOEL!.
JOAN! WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THERE?

RRUUURAAAAHHHH!
UUURAAAHH!

YOU SELF-RIGHTEOUS BITCH!
I'VE HAD IT WITH YOU
BELIEVE ME...
KRAK!
...THE FEELING'S MUTUAL!

A FRESH SOUL!

JOAN, WAIT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I GUESS IT JUST WASN'T MEANT TO BE.
GOING TO HELP NARA.
GOODBYE, NOEL.
NO! THIS ONE IS MINE!

NNNH!!!
CRY OUT! CRY OUT TO YOUR GOD! HE HAS FORSAKEN YOU! HE HAS FORSAKEN US ALL!
IN THE DEPTHS OF THE ABYSS YOU WILL KNOW THE TRUE MEANING OF TORMENT AND DESPAIR!
GOOD! THEN WHAT ARE WE WAITING FOR?
LET'S GO!
URRGG!
GOTCHA!

JOAN? IS THAT YOU?
YOU'VE FOUGHT WELL, NARA. I'M PROUD OF YOU. BUT I'LL TAKE THINGS FROM HERE.
NO, I CAN'T LET YOU DO THIS ALONE!
THERE'S NOTHING LEFT FOR ME. I HAVE TO DO THIS. GO BACK, NARA. YOUR FRIENDS NEED YOU. NOEL NEEDS YOU.
?!

JOAN!
OKAY, MALACHI... ANYONE WHO'S LISTENING- I COULD REALLY USE A HAND HERE!

NARA!
ARE YOU OKAY? WHAT HAPPENED?!
IT'S OVER.
JOAN...?
OH, GOD...NO.

SHE'S GONE, NARA. I COULDN'T SAVE HER.
NO!
GOD, NOOOO!!

NARA. WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I HAVE THE POWER. I'M GOING TO SAVE HER.
YOU CANNOT.
WHY? THIS ISN'T RIGHT! SHE CAN'T DIE! WHAT HAPPENED TO ALL THAT TALK OF CHOICES AND FAITH?
NEITHER SHE NOR HER CHILD IS MARKED FOR RESURRECTION.
CHILD?
NARA, THERE IS AN ORDER TO THINGS THAT MUST BE MAINTAINED. YOU MUSTN'T DO THIS.
AND IF I DO?
THERE WILL BE A PRICE TO PAY.
I DON'T CARE. I'LL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES.
VERY WELL.

HAZY?!
NARA! WHAT HAPPENED?
IT DOESN'T MATTER. EVERYTHING IS OKAY NOW.
NARA...YOU'RE BLEEDING..!
I HAD TO DO IT... FOR YOU.
NARA, NO!

YOU CAN'T DIE! I CAN'T LOSE YOU AGAIN!
IT'S OKAY. IT'S BETTER THIS WAY.
NO!
I'M HAPPY FOR YOU, HAZY - FOR YOU AND ELIJAH. AND I'M SORRY...FOR EVERYTHING.
TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOUR BABY. SHE'S GOING TO NEED YOU.

TIARA LEIGH KILDARE
JULY 5, 1986 - AUG. 12, 200

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO HIM NOW?
HE WILL GO ON, AS HE ALWAYS HAS. FOR YOU, IT IS TIME TO MOVE ON. THIS CHAPTER OF YOUR EXISTENCE IS OVER. A NEW ONE IS ABOUT TO BEGIN.

BOOK 4

the 13th brother

CHAPTER 1

HERE IT COMES. JUST PLAY IT SMART. YOU CAN DO THIS. PUT ON THE WHOLE "CONTRITE AND REMORSEFUL" ROUTINE AND YOU STILL MIGHT COME OUT OF THIS OKAY -
WHAT? WHY ARE YOU LOOKING AT ME LIKE THAT? WERE YOU EXPECTING ME TO BE *WIELDING AN AX?*
UNFORTUNATELY, MY MOUTH MOVES FASTER THAN MY BRAIN.

LOOKING AT THAT POOR BOY? YES! WHAT IN GOD'S NAME IS WRONG WITH YOU, ASIA? THIS IS THE THIRD TIME THIS YEAR I'VE HAD TO LEAVE WORK TO COME OVER HERE! WHY CAN'T YOU CONTROL YOURSELF?
HE GRABBED MY ASS.
THAT'S NO REASON TO GO AND BEAT HIM INTO A BLOODY PULP!
HIS PARENTS ARE GOING TO PRESS CHARGES, SUE US FOR MEDICAL EXPENSES. YOU THINK I CAN AFFORD THAT?
I SWEAR TO GOD...DO I HAVE TO GET RAPED FOR YOU TO TAKE MY SIDE?
YEAH, THAT WAS PROBABLY GOING TOO FAR. BUT IT STILL GETS THE DESIRED RESULT - SHE SHUTS UP.
I'VE ALREADY INFORMED YOUR DAUGHTER THAT THERE WILL BE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR HER ACTIONS. FOR STARTERS, SHE'S GOING ON ONE WEEK SUSPENSION...
GOOD. NO SCHOOL.
...ALL OF WHICH WILL BE MADE UP IN THE SUMMER. THIS IS YOUR FINAL WARNING. IF I HAVE TO SEE YOU IN MY OFFICE ONE MORE TIME, YOU WILL BE EXPELLED AND SENT TO GREENVIEW.
WITH ALL THE CRIMINALS AND RETARDS? NO THANKS.
THEN GET YOUR ACT TOGETHER!
TO THE CAR. NOW!

I'M SO SORRY, MR. MARX. I DON'T KNOW WHERE I WENT WRONG...
KIDS THESE DAYS. COMPLETE LACK OF RESPECT, REJECTION OF AUTHORITY. NINE TIMES OUT OF TEN IT'S BECAUSE THERE'S A PROBLEM AT HOME.
I'M DOING THE BEST I CAN RAISING HER ALONE.
I'M SURE YOU ARE, MRS. BLACK. I'M SURE YOU ARE.
AS SOON AS SHE GETS IN THE CAR, SHE STARTS UP THE WATERWORKS. I DON'T KNOW WHY, BUT IT MAKES ME FEEL ASHAMED OF HER. IT MAKES HER SEEM SO...WEAK.
YOU'RE TURNING EIGHTEEN TOMORROW. YOU THINK YOU CAN START TO GROW UP A LITTLE?
I DIDN'T RAISE YOU TO BE THIS WAY. WHAT HAPPENED?
FINE. HAVE IT YOUR WAY. BUT YOU'RE GROUNDED.
THAT'S WHEN I LOSE IT. AGAIN.
YOU'RE NOT GROUNDING ME THE DAY BEFORE MY BIRTHDAY! MY FRIENDS ARE THROWING ME A PARTY TONIGHT!
TOUGH. YOU'RE STAYING HOME.
POWERLESS, I UNLEASH THE MOST EFFECTIVE WEAPON IN MY ARSENAL.
I HATE YOU.

JOINING US TODAY IS REVEREND HENRICK STRAUSS, AUTHOR OF THE CONTROVERSIAL NEW BOOK, "UNDYING: LIVING IN THE LAST DAYS - THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD AND THE REEMERGENCE OF THE SUPERNATURAL." NOW, REVEREND, THIS BOOK IS CAUSING QUITE A STIR IN SOME CIRCLES BECAUSE YOU CLAIM, AND I QUOTE, "...THE DEAD ARE RISING, AND ARE WALKING AMONG US AS WE SPEAK."
UNDYING
HENRICK STRAUSS
FIRST OF ALL, THANKS FOR HAVING ME. BUT YES, I DO BELIEVE THAT, NOT SIMPLY BECAUSE OF MY FAITH, BUT BECAUSE OF THE OVERWHELMING EVIDENCE. IN FACT, DARLINGTON HILLS SEEMS TO ACT AS A GROUND ZERO FOR WHAT I BELIEVE ARE SUPERNATURAL EVENTS LEADING US TO THE LAST DAYS.
THAT'S A VERY LOADED STATEMENT. YOU CARE TO ELABORATE ON THIS "EVIDENCE."
IF YOU'LL REMEMBER JUST A FEW YEARS AGO, THERE WAS A SERIES OF BIZARRE UNSOLVED MURDERS, ALONG WITH A MASSIVE DESECRATION OF DARLINGTON HILLS CEMETERY. IN MY BOOK I'VE DOCUMENTED DOZENS OF EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS FROM PEOPLE WHO CLAIM TO HAVE SEEN DEAD FRIENDS AND RELATIVES ALIVE AND WELL FOLLOWING THOSE EVENTS.
NOW NEWS LIVE
HENRICK STRAUSS
MY RESEARCH LED ME ON A TRAIL THAT ENDED UP CONNECTING ALL OF THIS TO THE ASSASSINATION OF SENATOR VICTOR ALCASAN. ALL OF THIS IS DOCUMENTED IN MY BOOK.
ARE SAYING THERE WAS SOME KIND OF COVER-UP?
TURN IT OFF.

YOU BELIEVE THAT CRAP?
THAT "CRAP" GOT MY FATHER KILLED.
I'M SORRY, MR. PITCH. I DIDN'T MEAN TO-
IT'S ALL RIGHT. HE'S JUST BEEN ON MY MIND A LOT LATELY.
WELL, THAT'S TO BE EXPECTED. I KNOW HOW HARD IT WAS FOR YOU TO COME HERE...FINALLY CLAIM YOUR INHERITANCE.
I SHOULD'VE DONE IT SOONER. MY FATHER AND I NEVER SAW EYE TO EYE ON ANYTHING, BUT...I DON'T KNOW. I GUESS I'VE BEEN AFRAID OF WHAT I'LL FIND.
AFRAID?
THAT HE'LL HAVE DIED THE MISERABLE HUMAN BEING I ALWAYS BELIEVED HIM TO BE. THAT HE'LL HAVE DIED ALONE, OBSESSED WITH HIS ARTIFACTS AND BOOKS AND SUPERSTITIOUS MYTHS.
YOU NEVER TOLD ME WHAT REALLY HAPPENED.
THE OFFICIAL STORY WAS THAT HE WAS SHOT DEFENDING HIS HOME FROM A BURGLAR. BUT MY FATHER WAS INVOLVED WITH SOME VERY DANGEROUS MEN...RELIGIOUS ZEALOTS. BUT YOU WANT TO KNOW THE KICKER?
THEY NEVER FOUND HIS HEAD.

BG HAIR COLOR
BLACK
MOM ENDED UP TAKING THE REST OF THE DAY OFF.
"TOO DEPRESSED TO WORK" SHE SAID.
PIZZA PAT
GOOD THING FOR ME.
DEPRESSION PLUS PILLS EQUALS EIGHT HOUR NAP.

UMM...NO. TOO OLD SCHOOL.
UGH. TOO GOTH.
TOTAL PERV MAGNET. MOST DEFINITELY NO.
THAT WORKS.

TAP! TAP! TAP!
DAVON! YOU SCARED THE HELL OUT OF ME!
ASIA BLACK, BACK IN BLACK! YOU ALMOST READY?
ARE YOU ALREADY DRUNK?
SORRY! IT'S PATRICK'S FAULT.
WHAT? WHAT THE HELL IS HE DOING AT MY PARTY? NEARLY THIRTY AND HANGING AROUND WITH KIDS HALF HIS AGE. LOSER.
SPEAKING OF LOSERS...HOW'S MIKE?

HIS PARENTS WERE CALLING THE HOUSE ALL DAY. THEY'RE THREATENING TO SUE US, BLAH BLAH BLAH.
WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
WHAT CAN I DO? WE DON'T EVEN HAVE ANYTHING FOR THEM TO SUE FOR.
YOUR MOM'S PRETTY PISSED, HUH?
SHE'LL GET OVER IT. THE WAY I SEE IT, THIS IS ALL HER FAULT ANYWAY. EVER SINCE I WAS LITTLE I'VE SEEN HER LET EVERY GUY SHE'S BEEN WITH SLAP HER AROUND. I SWORE I WOULD NEVER BE THAT WAY.
WELL, I'M GLAD YOU DID IT. THAT JERK HAD IT COMING.
YEAH. IT FELT PRETTY GOOD.
JUST ONE MORE THING.
WELL, LET'S GO. EVERYONE'S WAITING FOR THE BIRTHDAY GIRL.
SAD.
I ONLY FEEL GUILTY FOR NOT FEELING GUILTY.

ALL RIGHT. LET'S PARTY!
BREE! I'M HOME!
DAD! HOW WAS THE INTERVIEW?
NOT TOO BAD. JIM JUST CALLED ON MY WAY BACK. SAID WE SOLD A COUPLE HUNDRED COPIES WITHIN HALF AN HOUR OF THE AIRING.
THAT'S GREAT!
YOU HAD DINNER?
YEAH. YOURS IS SITTING IN THE MICROWAVE.
THANKS, HONEY. SO, WHAT ARE YOU PLANS FOR THE NIGHT?
OH, I WAS JUST GOING TO STAY HOME AND WATCH TV.
ON A FRIDAY? WHY DON'T YOU GO OVER TO AMANDA'S FOR THE NIGHT? HERE. HERE'S SOME MONEY. YOU GUYS GO SEE A MOVIE OR SOMETHING.
DAD...ARE YOU SURE?
POSITIVE. YOU STAY COOPED UP IN THIS HOUSE TOO MUCH. GO HAVE A GOOD TIME.
OKAY. THANKS, DAD. I LOVE YOU!
LOVE YOU, TOO. SEE YOU TOMORROW.

YOU FEEL LIKE TALKING?
SAVE IT. IT'S GOING TO BE A LONG NIGHT....JUST YOU AND ME.
PLEASE...JUST LET ME GO! I'LL GIVE YOU WHATEVER YOU WANT. I HAVE A FAMILY!

WHAT WOULD YOUR CHURCH THINK IF THEY KNEW YOU HAD A HELPLESS MAN, BEATEN AND TIED UP IN YOUR BASEMENT.
THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION. BUT YOU'RE NOT HELPLESS, ARE YOU, FRANK? YOU'RE NOT EVEN A MAN.
BLEHHG!
CHRISTIAN FILTH!
NOW, THAT'S THE FRANK I KNOW! SO, YOU GOING TO TELL ME WHAT YOU'RE DOING IN DARLINGTON HILLS, OR DOES THIS HAVE TO GET UGLY AGAIN?
YOUR DAUGHTER WAS DOWN HERE TODAY, HENRICK.
SHUT UP. I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING.
SHE MAY LOOK INNOCENT, BUT HER HEART LUSTS FOR SIN AND DEPRAVITY. YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THE LOOK IN HER EYES AS I SLID MY TONGUE DOWN HER THROAT!
SMACK
HEHEHEH.... YOU'RE SO WEAK. IF YOU CAN'T STAND YOUR GROUND WITH ME, YOU'LL NEVER SURVIVE WHAT'S COMING.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
THIS IS IT, HENRICK! THE DAWNING OF OUR NIGHT DIVINE. THE ABYSS WILL BE OPENED. HELL IS COMING.

THE PITCH ESTATE
I DON'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU JUST DIDN'T HIRE SOME MOVERS TO COME TAKE CARE OF THIS STUFF.
DON'T TRUST THEM. AS CRAZY AS MY FATHER WAS, HE KNEW A THING OR TWO ABOUT ARTIFACTS AND ANTIQUITIES. I'M SURE THIS LIBRARY ALONE IS WORTH A COUPLE MILLION.
WELL, YOU WERE RIGHT ABOUT ONE THING. YOUR FATHER DIDN'T THROW ANYTHING AWAY.
JUST HIS FAMILY.
OUCH.
SORRY, BAD JOKE.
LISTEN. I WAS THINKING OF TAKING THE RENTAL CAR INTO TOWN, MAYBE HAVING SOME DRINKS. YOU CARE TO JOIN ME?
I WAS ACTUALLY JUST ABOUT TO CALL IT A NIGHT. I CAN BARELY KEEP MY EYES OPEN. BUT THANKS FOR THE INVITATION, MR. PITCH. MAYBE NEXT TIME.
SURE. AND, AMY...WE'RE AWAY FROM THE OFFICE. YOU CAN CALL ME ZACH.
MY CELL VIBRATES IN MY BACK POCKET. IT'S MOM AGAIN, FOR ABOUT THE TENTH TIME. I'M SO BUSTED. MIGHT AS WELL MAKE IT COUNT, RIGHT?

HEY, DAVON. YOU SEEN TREVOR?
I THINK HE'S UPSTAIRS IN THE MIDDLE OF SOME VIDEO GAME TOURNAMENT. WHY? DON'T TELL ME YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT MAKING UP WITH HIM. DIDN'T YOU SAY SOMETHING EARLIER ABOUT NOT LETTING GUYS WALK ALL OVER YOU?
I *KNOW*, BUT HE GAVE ME THIS *REALLY* SWEET BIRTHDAY CARD. I FEEL KINDA BAD, YOU KNOW. MAYBE I WAS TOO HARD ON HIM.
OH, GOD, ASIA...NOT *THIS* AGAIN! YOU'RE SO DAMN *EMOTIONAL* WHEN YOU'RE DRUNK.
I CAN'T HELP IT. I *REALLY* DO LOVE HIM.
WHATEVER. DON'T SAY I DIDN'T WARN YOU.
UM...I WOULDN'T GO IN THERE.
SHUT UP, BRIAN.
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS?
ASIA!
ENJOY EACH OTHER'S *STDs*!
ASIA, WAIT!

SLAM!
GOD, I'M SO STUPID...DAVON WAS RIGHT. DAMN IT, I HATE MYSELF. I'M NO DIFFERENT THAN MY MOM.
BLECCHH!
MY HEAD IS SPINNING. I'M NOT SURE IF IT'S THE ALCOHOL, OR THE SIGHT OF SEEING MY EX-BOYFRIEND HAVING SEX WITH JESSICA WEBSTER, BUT SOMETHING ISN'T RIGHT.
DEFINITELY NOT RIGHT.

UMM....

AASSIAAA
THIS IS NOT HAPPENING. THIS IS NOT HAPPENING. THIS IS NOT HAPPENING.
THAT'S IT. I'M DONE DRINKING.
DAVON! WE'RE GOING.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN? YOU CAN'T LEAVE YOUR OWN PARTY. WE HAVEN'T EVEN DONE THE COUNTDOWN YET!
I'M SO NOT HAPPY WITH YOU RIGHT NOW.
I KNOW...
I WORKED HARD TO SET UP THAT PARTY FOR YOU.
I KNOW. I'M SORRY.
I TRIED TO WARN YOU ABOUT TREVOR.

LOOK, YOU CAN RUB IT IN TOMORROW. RIGHT NOW MY HEAD IS POUNDING. GOD, THIS IS THE CRAPPIEST BIRTHDAY EVER. TO HELL WITH 18.
IT'S NOT EVEN TECHNICALLY YOUR BIRTHDAY YET. YOU'VE STILL GOT ABOUT TWENTY MINUTES. THINGS COULD TURN AROUND.
WAIT A SECOND. ISN'T THAT....THAT'S WAYNE'S CAR!
I THOUGHT YOUR MOM BROKE UP WITH HIM.
SHE DID. SHE EVEN HAS A RESTRAINING ORDER.
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE, WAYNE? WHERE'S MY MOM?
STOP! I'M CALLING THE COPS!
ASIA!!
WHAT-?
SHE'S HURT BAD, ASIA. SHE'S BLEEDING EVERYWHERE! WHAT DO WE DO?
SOMETHING LIKE GUILT FORMS IN THE PIT OF MY STOMACH. BUT I BURY IT WITH RAGE.

CALL 911.
ASIA, WAIT! WHERE ARE YOU GOING? ASIA!
I SWEAR TO GOD, YOU'D BETTER PRAY I DON'T CATCH YOU. BECAUSE I WILL KILL YOU.
CRAZY BITCH! WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?

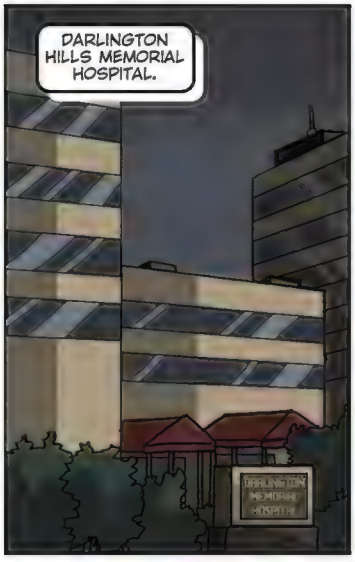
WHAT IN GOD'S NAME?
I LOOK UP JUST IN TIME TO SEE IT - ANOTHER HALLUCINATION.
I DON'T SEE THE ONCOMING CAR UNTIL IT'S TOO LATE.
I SLAM ON THE BRAKES. THE CAR SWERVES OUT OF CONTROL.
THE LAST THING I SEE IS THE GUARDRAIL.

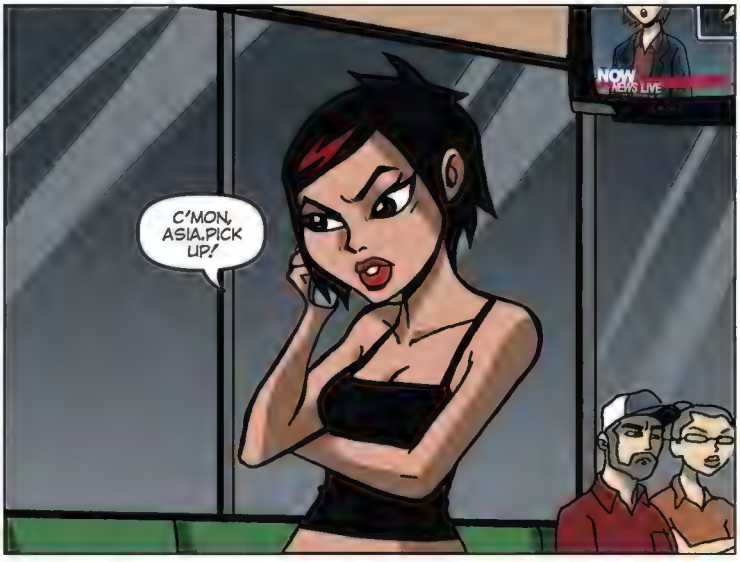
GLASS.
BLOOD.
METAL.
AND THEN...
...NOTHING.

CHAPTER 2

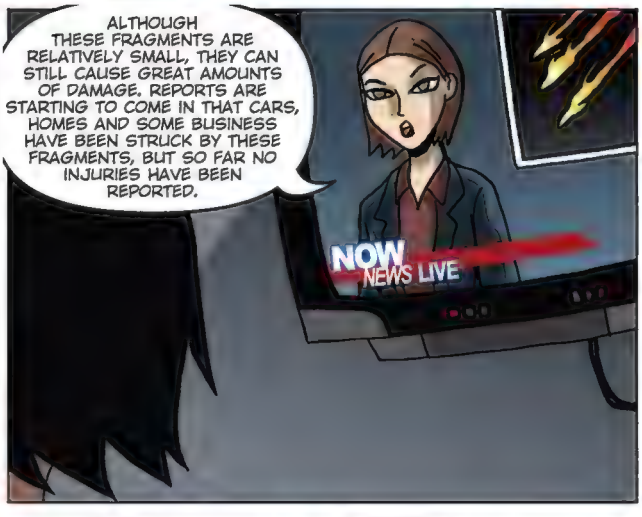
TELL ME WHAT I WANT TO KNOW, FRANK. I'M LOSING MY PATIENCE.
WHAT ARE YOU PLANNING?
DAMN YOU! TELL ME!
I AM A SERVANT OF THE PROPHET BOLABOGG, LORD OF THE TWELVE BROTHERS. I AM HERE TO HELP PREPARE THE WAY FOR THE COMING OF THE ONE WHO IS GREATER THAN THE TWELVE, EVEN GREATER THAN BOLABOGG HIMSELF.
WHO?
THE ELDER AND PRINCE...THE THIRTEENTH BROTHER, EBRU LABADON. THE REBELLION HAS TURNED THE TIDE. THE GATES OF TARTARUS HAVE BEEN SMASHED. THE LORD PROPHET AND HIS ARMY WILL SOON BE FREE FROM THEIR PRISON.
PRISON?
ITS REMAINS WILL FALL FROM THE HEAVENS AND SHATTER UPON THE EARTH. THEN OUR LORD WILL BE FREE.

MY GOD, I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
I'M ALIVE.
YOUR LUCK IS GOING TO RUN OUT SOME DAY, ZACH
HELLO? IS EVERYONE ALL RIGHT?
HELLO?
OH, GOD!


DARLINGTON HILLS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL.


C'MON, ASIA, PICK UP!
NOW NEWS LIVE

...THE METEOR, WHICH SEEMED TO COME OUT OF NOWHERE, BROKE UP INTO SEVERAL SMALLER FRAGMENTS UPON ENTERING THE ATMOSPHERE.


ALTHOUGH THESE FRAGMENTS ARE RELATIVELY SMALL, THEY CAN STILL CAUSE GREAT AMOUNTS OF DAMAGE. REPORTS ARE STARTING TO COME IN THAT CARS, HOMES AND SOME BUSINESS HAVE BEEN STRUCK BY THESE FRAGMENTS, BUT SO FAR NO INJURIES HAVE BEEN REPORTED.
NOW NEWS LIVE

DAVON!

TREVOR. WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
I HEARD WHAT HAPPENED...IS ASIA OKAY?
I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE ASIA IS. SHE WON'T ANSWER.

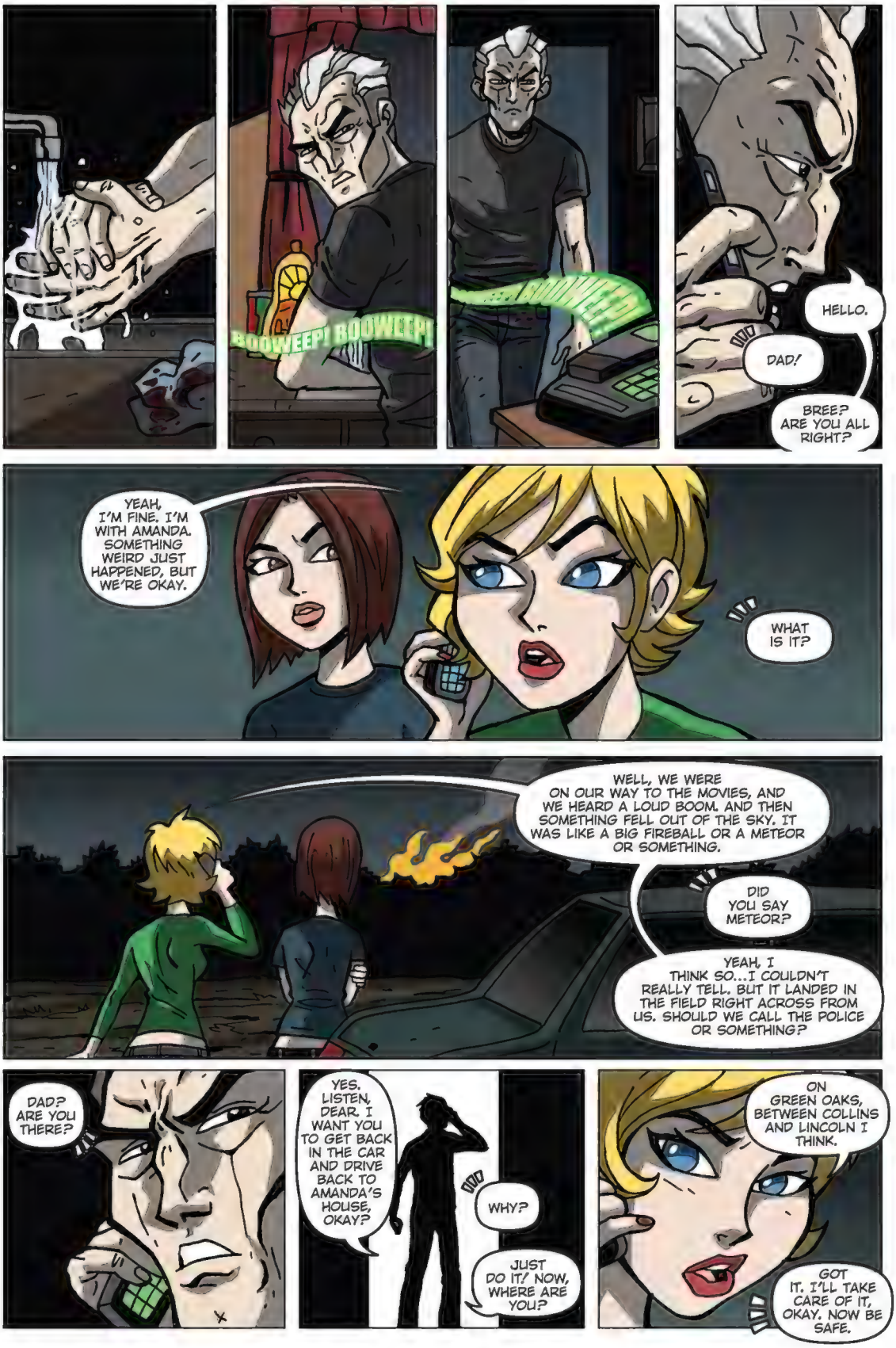
WHAT HAPPENED?
HER MOM'S BOYFRIEND BEAT THE CRAP OUT OF HER.
ASIA WENT CHASING AFTER HIM, AND I HAVEN'T SEEN HER SINCE.
HOW'S HER MOM?
STILL IN SURGERY. OH, TREVOR...IT WAS HORRIBLE. SHE WAS BEAT UP REALLY BAD.

I SWEAR, IF ASIA DOES ANYTHING STUPID, I'LL KILL HER.
THERE IS FIRE...BUT I DO NOT BURN.
THERE ARE WORDS....BUT I DO NOT UNDERSTAND.
THERE IS A FACE ... FAMILIAR YET STRANGE.
I AM DEAD. ...BUT I LIVE.

ALIVE. I'M ALIVE!
I FEEL AIR RETURN TO MY LUNGS, LIKE IT'S THE FIRST TIME.
FOR AN INSTANT, I UNDERSTAND IT ALL - LIFE, DEATH, LOVE, SIN, HEAVEN AND HELL. EVERYTHING MAKES SENSE.
AND JUST AS QUICKLY, IT'S GONE...LIKE ALL I'VE EVER KNOWN IS DARKNESS AND CONFUSION.
THE CUTS AND GLASS ARE DEEP.
I FEEL THEM, BUT THE SENSATION IS NOTHING LIKE PAIN...
...IT'S JUST A *KNOWING.*

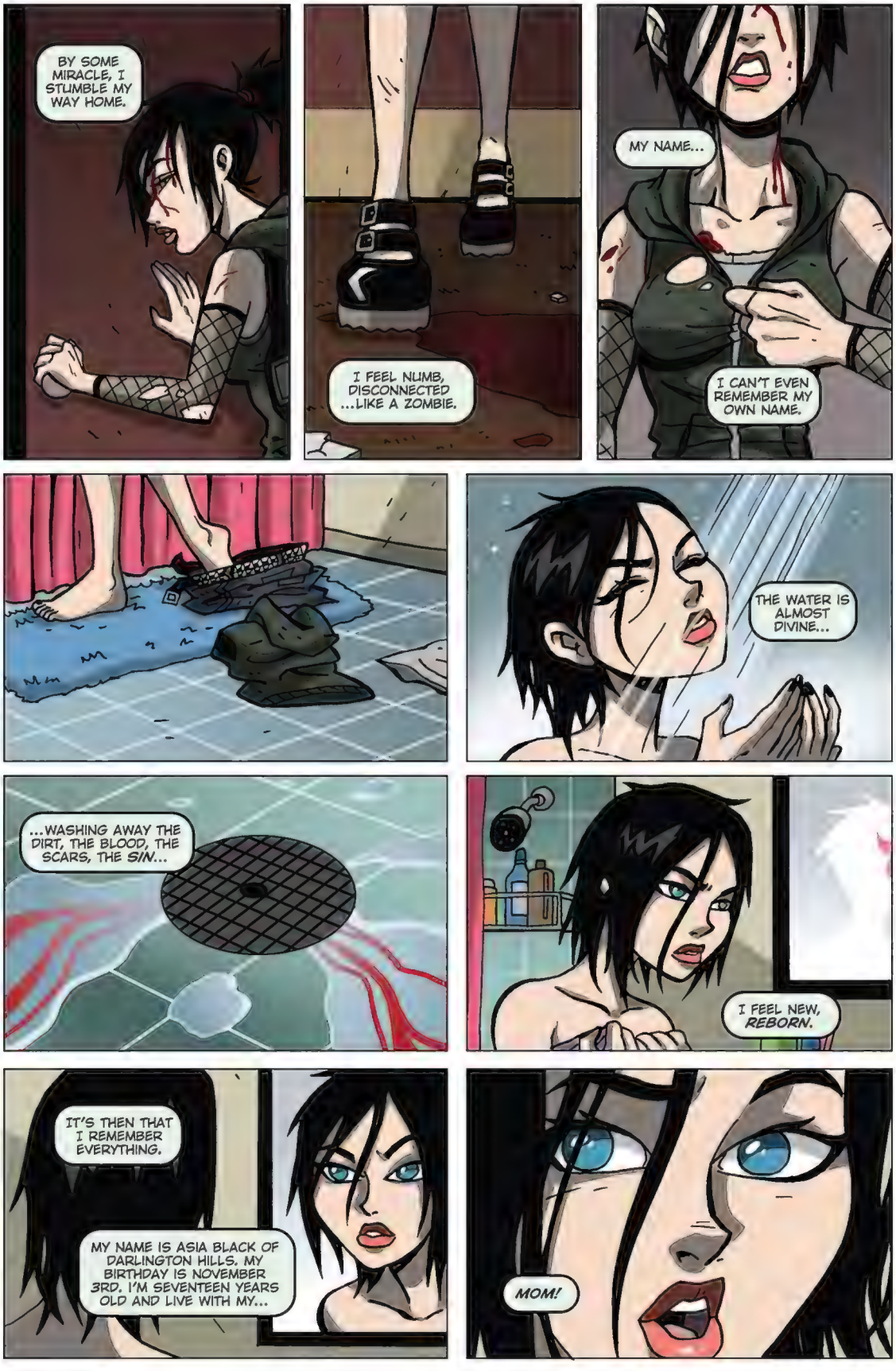
SOMETHING GUIDES ME.
SOMETHING LIKE INSTINCT.
I AM NOT CONSCIOUS OF MY MOVEMENTS, YET I AM IN COMPLETE CONTROL.
IT'S THE FEELING OF PRACTICING SOMETHING OVER AND OVER AGAIN UNTIL YOU'RE SO GOOD AT IT, YOU CAN DO IT IN YOUR SLEEP.
ONLY, I'VE NEVER DONE THIS BEFORE.

PLEASE...PLEASE HELP ME! I'M...I'M SORRY ABOUT YOUR MOTHER. I DIDN'T MEAN FOR THAT TO HAPPEN.
PLEASE! MY LEGS...THEY'RE CRUSHED!
WAIT...NO! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
MY GOD PREPARES ME A TABLE IN THE PRESENCE OF MY ENEMIES.
GODDAMN YOU! I HOPE YOU AND YOUR MOTHER BOTH BURN IN HELL!!
HE ANOINTS MY HEAD.
THWAK!!
MY CUP RUNNETH OVER.


BOOWEEP! BOOWEEP!
BOOWEEP!
HELLO.
DAD!
BREE? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YEAH, I'M FINE. I'M WITH AMANDA. SOMETHING WEIRD JUST HAPPENED, BUT WE'RE OKAY.
WHAT IS IT?
WELL, WE WERE ON OUR WAY TO THE MOVIES, AND WE HEARD A LOUD BOOM. AND THEN SOMETHING FELL OUT OF THE SKY. IT WAS LIKE A BIG FIREBALL OR A METEOR OR SOMETHING.
DID YOU SAY METEOR?
YEAH, I THINK SO...I COULDN'T REALLY TELL. BUT IT LANDED IN THE FIELD RIGHT ACROSS FROM US. SHOULD WE CALL THE POLICE OR SOMETHING?
DAD? ARE YOU THERE?
YES. LISTEN, DEAR. I WANT YOU TO GET BACK IN THE CAR AND DRIVE BACK TO AMANDA'S HOUSE, OKAY?
WHY?
JUST DO IT. NOW, WHERE ARE YOU?
ON GREEN OAKS, BETWEEN COLLINS AND LINCOLN I THINK.
GOT IT. I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT, OKAY. NOW BE SAFE.

KLANG!
YOU GOT SLOPPY, OLD MAN. NEVER TURN YOUR BACK ON ME.
STAURANT
WHAT IF HE DOESN'T SHOW? WHAT DO WE DO? THE FRAGMENTS HAVE ALREADY STARTED TO FALL.
PATIENCE. HE'LL BE HERE. WE MUSTN'T LOSE -
-FAITH. PRAISE BOLABOGG!
MY BROTHERS!

FRANK. ARE YOU ALL RIGHT? WE WERE BEGINNING TO FEAR YOU WOULDN'T MAKE IT.
I'M FINE, THANKS TO THE MERCY OF THE PROPHET - PEACE BE UPON HIM.
WE HAVE TO HURRY. IT'S ALREADY BEGUN. RICH AND MARKOS HAVE STARTED THEIR SEARCH OF THE SOUTH SIDE. I PRAY WE WON'T BE TOO LATE.
NO WORRIES, MY FRIEND. I'VE GOT A LITTLE SURPRISE FOR YOU.
Green Oak's + Collins
THANKS TO THIS *PIG*, I WAS ABLE TO GET THE EXACT LOCATION OF ONE OF THE FRAGMENTS.
PRAISE BOLABOGG. HE HAS SURELY BLESSED US THIS NIGHT. NOW LET US HURRY. THE COMING OF OUR LORD IS IMMINENT.


BY SOME MIRACLE, I STUMBLE MY WAY HOME.
I FEEL NUMB, DISCONNECTED ...LIKE A ZOMBIE.
MY NAME...
I CAN'T EVEN REMEMBER MY OWN NAME.
THE WATER IS ALMOST DIVINE...
...WASHING AWAY THE DIRT, THE BLOOD, THE SCARS, THE SIN...
I FEEL NEW, REBORN.
IT'S THEN THAT I REMEMBER EVERYTHING.
MY NAME IS ASIA BLACK OF DARLINGTON HILLS. MY BIRTHDAY IS NOVEMBER 3RD. I'M SEVENTEEN YEARS OLD AND LIVE WITH MY...
MOM!

I DON'T CARE, AMY. I JUST WANT ON THE FIRST FLIGHT OUT OF HERE.
WHAT ABOUT ALL THIS STUFF?
I'LL SEND SOMEONE TO TAKE CARE OF IT. JUST PLEASE DO AS I ASK, OKAY?
IS THERE SOMETHING I SHOULD KNOW?
LOOK, I JUST PULLED UP. I'LL BE UP IN A SECOND TO -
WHOOSH
BOOM!
AMY!
ELSEWHERE.
AMANDA! COME ON! DAD WILL BE PISSED IF WE'RE NOT GONE WHEN HE GETS HERE.
GEEZ, HOLD ON. I JUST WANT TO GET A QUICK LOOK.
THERE'S SOMEONE COMING! AMANDA!

WAIT...WHO ARE YOU?
GRAB HER! I'M GOING AFTER THE FRAGMENT.
NO!
MMMMPHHH!!

PRAISE THE PROPHET!

WELL DONE, FAITHFUL SERVANT. YOUR PRAYERS WERE SUCCESSFUL IN AIDING OUR ESCAPE. MY NAME IS BELPHEGOR, GENERAL TO THE PROPHET'S ARMY.
THE PROPHET HIMSELF, EBRU LABADON, STILL LIES IN WAIT. THERE IS MORE WORK TO BE DONE BEFORE HIS ARRIVAL. HIS ARMY LIES SCATTERED AMONG THE SHARDS OF TARTARUS. AS GENERAL OF THE PROPHET'S FORCES,
I ASK FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE IN RAISING UP HIS ARMY TO PREPARE FOR THE PROPHET'S ARRIVAL AND CONQUEST. DO YOU SWEAR YOUR UNDYING ALLEGIANCE TO THE ARMY OF THE PROPHET AND TO THE PROPHET HIMSELF?
I... I WILL DO WHATEVER YOU ASK.
GOOD. I REQUIRE THE USE OF YOUR BODY.
AHHHHHGGGG!!

I MOVE AT SPEEDS THAT FEEL SUPER-HUMAN, FUELED BY SHAME, GUILT, AND FOR MAYBE THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE, LOVE FOR SOMEONE OTHER THAN MYSELF. I JUST WANT TO HOLD HER IN MY ARMS, TELL HER I'M SORRY FOR ALL THE STUPID THINGS I'VE DONE AND SAID.
PLEASE BE OKAY. PLEASE BE OKAY.
PLEASE...
I'M TOO LATE.

I HATE YOU.
THOSE WERE THE LAST WORDS I SAID TO HER. I WASN'T EVEN THERE FOR HER WHEN SHE NEEDED ME THE MOST.
I SHOULD HAVE BEEN THERE.
IT'S NOT FAIR. WHY COULDN'T IT HAVE BEEN ME?
IT *SHOULD* HAVE BEEN ME...

CHAPTER 3

I WAS WRONG!
PLEASE HELP ME!
ZACH!
DAD!
Darlington Hills Post
METEOR SHOWER
Darlington Hills
Sunrise Motel
6:15a

IT HAPPENS AGAIN.
I WAKE UP SOMEWHERE BESIDES MY OWN BED.

IT'S ALWAYS THE SAME PLACE, TOO.
SOUTH TOWN, INTERSECTION OF KOHL AND LAMONT.
THIS MAKES, WHAT? SIX TIMES IN TWO WEEKS? SIX TIMES SINCE MOM DIED. I STARTED WEARING MY CLOTHES TO BED AFTER THE SECOND TIME.
WALKING HOME IN THE SNOW IN NOTHING BUT YOUR UNDERWEAR FOR THREE MILES WILL DO THAT TO YOU.
SOMETHING'S HAPPENED TO ME. WHEN I LOOK IN THE MIRROR, I HARDLY RECOGNIZE MYSELF ANYMORE.
IT'S LIKE I'VE WOKEN UP IN SOMEONE ELSE'S SKIN, WITH SOMEONE ELSE'S LIFE. I DON'T KNOW IF IT STARTED WITH MOM DYING, OR THE CAR CRASH, OR THE FACT THAT I BASHED A GUY'S HEAD IN WITH A BASEBALL BAT. ALL I KNOW FOR SURE IS, TWO WEEKS AGO, SOME PART OF ME DIED.
I'M NOT A BIG BELIEVER IN SIGNS OR FATE OR DESTINY. BUT SOMETHING KEEPS BRINGING ME HERE.
UH!
AAAH!
OKAY. THAT'S REALLY FREAKIN' HOT.

OH GOD! I'M SO SORRY! ARE YOU ALRIGHT?
UGH! I THINK SO.
I REALLY AM SORRY. I DON'T KNOW WHAT -
IT'S OKAY. REALLY. I WAS OFF IN MY OWN WORLD. TOTALLY WASN'T PAYING ATTENTION.
LET ME BUY YOU SOME NEW CLOTHES, MAYBE SOMETHING TO EAT.
I'M NOT A VAGRANT.
NO, THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT, I WAS JUST -
LET'S START AGAIN. MY NAME'S ZACHARY PITCH.
ASIA BLACK.
NICE TO MEET YOU, ASIA.
JUST SO YOU KNOW THAT I'M NOT SOME RANDOM CREEP ON THE STREET, HERE'S MY CARD.
VEIL PUBLISHING
ZACHARY PITCH
PRESIDENT
NEW YORK
LOOK, I'D REALLY LIKE TO DO WHATEVER I CAN TO MAKE THIS UP TO YOU.
I'VE GOT SOMEWHERE I HAVE TO BE. JUST CALL ME IF YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND.

ELSEWHERE...
THIS CAN'T BE IT. THERE MUST BE MORE.
IT WILL BE ENOUGH FOR NOW. WE'VE WASTED TOO MUCH TIME ALREADY.
SO...WE'RE READY THEN?
YES. PARTAKE OF THE BLOOD OF OUR LORD.

DAVON'S FAMILY WAS KIND ENOUGH TO TAKE ME IN AFTER MOM DIED. I SOLD MOST OF OUR STUFF TO PAY DAVON BACK FOR WRECKING HER CAR.
STILL, WE BARELY SPEAK TO EACH OTHER ANYMORE. I THINK SHE'S STILL MAD AT ME FOR RUNNING OFF LIKE I DID, LEAVING HER TO DEAL WITH EVERYTHING. I CAN'T SAY I BLAME HER.
TREVOR CALLED FOR YOU AGAIN. AND HERE'S YOUR ASSIGNMENTS FOR THIS WEEK.
IF YOU'RE NOT GOING TO COME BACK TO SCHOOL, JUST DO EVERYONE A FAVOR AND DROP OUT, OKAY?
I'M A LITTLE TIRED OF MAKING EXCUSES TO EVERYONE FOR YOU.
HEY, DANI.
HEY, ASIA. WHAT'S UP? YOU AND DAVON STILL BUTTING HEADS?

I GUESS. I DON'T THINK SHE'S FORGIVEN ME YET.
SHE'S BEING SELFISH. SHE COULD BE A LITTLE MORE UNDERSTANDING AFTER ALL THAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU.
WELL, HAVING YOU TO TALK TO HAS MADE EVERYTHING A LITTLE EASIER.
I KNOW I'VE KIND OF INTRUDED ON YOU HERE, BUT I PROMISE I'LL BE GONE AS SOON AS I FIND A PLACE TO STAY.
NO, I *LIKE* HAVING YOU HERE. YOU'RE MORE OF A SISTER TO ME THAN DAVON HAS EVER BEEN.
CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING?
SURE.
WHERE DO YOU GO AT NIGHT?

YOU'VE SEEN ME LEAVE?
YOU DON'T REMEMBER? YOU LOOKED RIGHT AT ME LAST NIGHT. I WAS GOING TO SAY SOMETHING BUT YOU JUST GAVE ME THIS LOOK...
I DON'T REMEMBER ANY OF IT, DANI. I DON'T REMEMBER WAKING UP, LEAVING, ANYTHING.
I JUST KEEP WAKING UP IN SOUTH TOWN.
DO YOU THINK IT MEANS ANYTHING?
I DON'T KNOW. WHY DO YOU ASK?
I KEEP HAVING THESE DREAMS ABOUT YOU. THEY STARTED BEFORE YOU EVEN CAME TO LIVE WITH US. THEY'RE NEVER GOOD, THOUGH. BAD THINGS USUALLY HAPPEN. I EVEN DREAMT YOU DIED ONCE.
PITCH MANSION.
SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, MR. PITCH. I KNOW IT'S BEEN A TOUGH COUPLE OF WEEKS FOR YOU. I JUST WANTED TO UPDATE YOU ON OUR PROGRESS.
WHEN I PULLED UP, I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT. IT ALMOST LOOKS AS IF NOTHING EVER HAPPENED.
WELL, WE STILL GOT A COUPLE OF AREAS TO PATCH UP, BUT SHE'S ALMOST AS GOOD AS NEW.
THANKS FOR ALL YOUR HARD WORK, BOB. I REALLY APPRECIATE IT.
THERE'S ONE MORE THING. I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT WANT TO HAVE THIS

SEEMS THIS HERE IS THE CAUSE OF ALL YOUR PROBLEMS...
...IF YOU CAN BELIEVE IT.
IF I HAVE TO SLEEP ONE MORE NIGHT IN MY CLOTHES I'M GOING TO SCREAM.
HOPEFULLY, WHATEVER IT IS THAT'S DRIVING ME OUT THERE, WHETHER IT BE FATE OR PSYCHOLOGY, WILL BE RESOLVED TONIGHT.
MAYBE I SHOULD TAKE ALONG A LITTLE INSURANCE JUST IN CASE.

MOVE!
ON YOUR KNEES!
WHERE'S MY DAUGHTER?
I WANT TO SEE MY DAUGHTER!
YOU HAVE BEEN GRANTED ONE LAST CHANCE TO EMBRACE THE TRUTH AND PEACE OF THE PROPHET.
EMBRACE HIM, DENOUNCE YOUR GOD, AND YOU WILL BE ALLOWED ENTRANCE INTO THE BROTHERHOOD. RESIST, AND YOU WILL DIE.
I'VE ALREADY EXPOSED THE TRUTH. KILLING ME WILL ONLY ADD CREDIBILITY TO MY CAUSE. PEOPLE ARE ON TO YOU. YOUR TIME IS UP.
YOU'RE WRONG. YOUR DEATH WILL BE STAGED AS A SUICIDE. A LETTER WILL BE FOUND IN WHICH YOU PROCLAIM YOURSELF A FRAUD AND THAT EVERYTHING YOU WROTE IN YOUR BOOK WAS A LIE. YOU KILLED YOURSELF RATHER THAN LIVE WITH THE SHAME.
THIS IS NOT OVER.
PRAISE THE PROPHET! DEATH TO THE -

KRAK!!

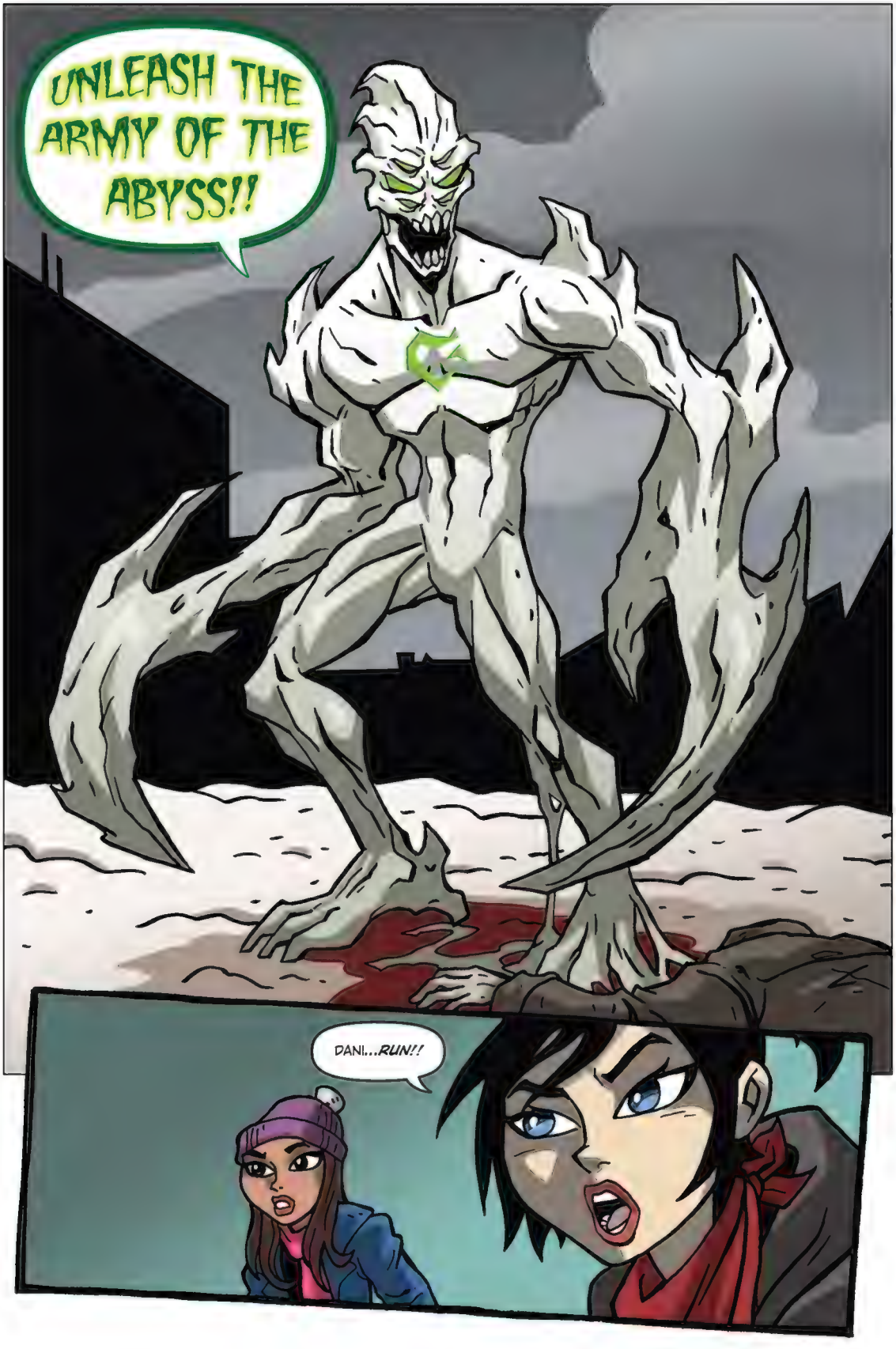
UNH!

KAFT!

YOU...YOU'RE ONE OF THEM, AREN'T YOU? THE *RESURRECTED ONES*...
ASIA? WHAT'S GOING ON?

I FOLLOWED TO MAKE SURE YOU WERE OKAY. WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I...I DON'T KNOW.
WHATEVER YOU TWO HAVE TO SORT OUT, DO IT LATER. THIS AIN'T OVER.
CRIK! SNAP!

KRAK!
CRRK!
URRRAAAGG!!


UNLEASH THE ARMY OF THE ABYSS!!
DANI...RUN!!

YOU SEE ANYTHING?
NO. NOTHING. THEY MAY BE WAITING US OUT.
WE'VE GOT TO GO BACK. THEY HAVE MY DAUGHTER!
CHAPTER 4

I HEARD YOU THE FIRST FIFTY TIMES. BUT IF WE GO BACK NOW, WE DON'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST THEM.
YOU DON'T KNOW THAT. I SAW YOU FIGHT BACK THERE. YOU'RE ONE OF THE RESURRECTED. IT'S YOUR DESTINY. IT'S WHAT YOU'RE HERE TO DO!
DON'T START WITH THAT.
HOW ELSE DO YOU EXPLAIN A TEENAGE GIRL REMOVING A MACHETE FROM HER GUT WITH ABOUT AS MUCH EFFORT AS PLUCKING HER EYEBROWS?

LISTEN, I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. YOUR CRAZY, RELIGIOUS, END-OF-THE- WORLD TALK MAY WORK ON YOUR GULLIBLE FOLLOWERS, BUT NOT ME. I'M NOT YOUR DAMN MESSIAH!
WHY ARE YOU RUNNING, ASIA? YOU'VE BEEN RUNNING ALL YOUR LIFE, AND YOU'RE RUNNING NOW. YOU KNOW WHAT I'M SAYING IS TRUE, YOU JUST DON'T WANT TO BELIEVE IT.
YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT ME.
MAYBE NOT. BUT I'VE SEEN YOUR TYPE BEFORE. YOU KNOW THE TRUTH, YOU'VE KNOWN IT FOR A WHILE, YOU'RE JUST SCARED TO ACCEPT IT.
CAN WE PLEASE JUST STOP ARGUING! I WANT TO GO HOME!
I'M SORRY, DANI. I'M TRYING TO GET YOU HOME. BUT JESUS CHRIST OVER THERE WANTS US TO ALL GO SACRIFICE OURSELVES TO SATISFY HIS APOCALYPTIC URGES.
I'M SORRY YOU FEEL THAT WAY. BUT WE'RE IN MIDDLE OF A WAR WHETHER YOU CHOOSE TO BELIEVE IT OR NOT. YOU CAN EITHER STAND AND FIGHT OR LINE UP FOR THE SLAUGHTER. IT'S YOUR CHOICE.
ELSEWHERE...

HAZY!

HAZY! GET YOUR ASS OUT HERE! YOU'RE UP!

ARE YOU FEELING OKAY?
YEAH. FINE. JUST A LITTLE TIRED.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
TAKE A LOOK.
OH MY GOD! WHAT'S HAPPENING? IT LOOKS LIKE THE WHOLE TOWN IS ON FIRE.
THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING.
ASIA, WHAT IS IT?

AAAAHH!
ASIA!
ASIA! WHAT IS IT? TALK TO ME!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND. THIS ISN'T RIGHT. THIS SHOULDN'T BE HAPPENING! ASIA, CAN YOU HEAR ME? ASIA!

* GASP *!!
ASIA!
STAY STILL, SWEETHEART. I'M GOING FOR HELP.
NO....NO.
YOU'RE *BLEEDING!* WE HAVE TO GET YOU TO A DOCTOR!
NO. I THINK I UNDERSTAND NOW. I *KNOW* WHAT IT IS I HAVE TO DO.

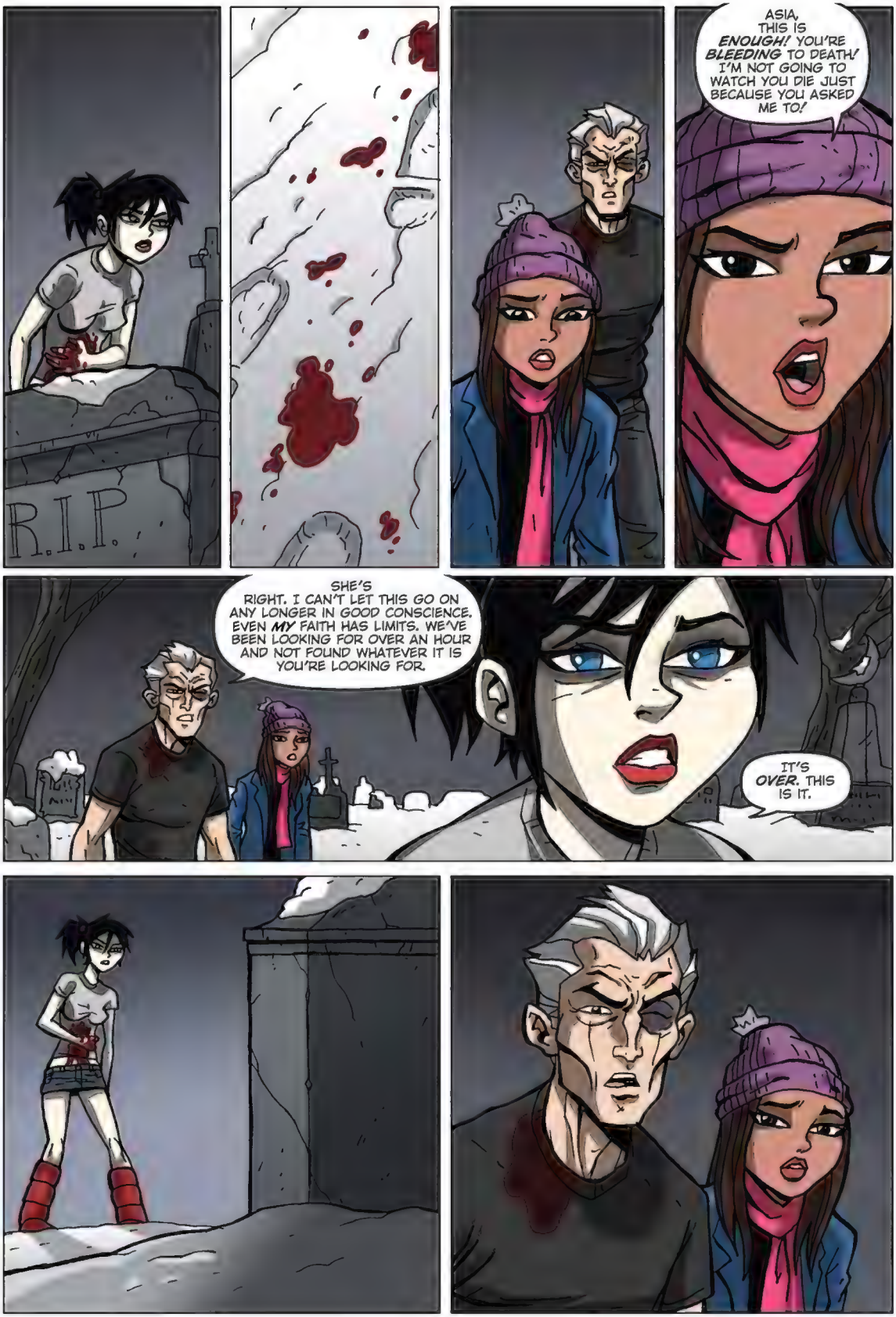
REMEMBER TO
GIRLS!
EXOTIC!
SEXY!
WILD!
HAVE FUN!
GET PAID!
GIVE IT UP FOR HAZYYYY!! WHAT A FIRECRACKER, AM I RIGHT?

GIRLS
OPEN
KK-KLAK
BACK OFF!!

UGGGUGGGH...

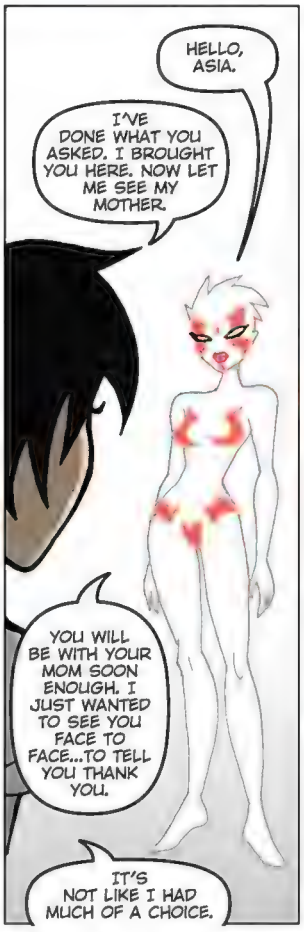
HENRICK IS SO READY TO BELIEVE IN ME THAT I'M ABLE TO CONVINCE HIM TO STEAL A CAR TO TAKE ME WHERE I NEED TO GO. DANI'S NOT HAPPY, BUT I DON'T SEE WHAT CHOICE WE HAVE.
I CAN'T EXPLAIN TO THEM HOW I KNOW WHAT I KNOW, OR WHAT IT ALL MEANS. I DON'T REALLY KNOW MYSELF. I JUST KNOW THIS IS WHAT HAS TO BE DONE. I JUST HOPE I LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO SEE IT THROUGH.
HENRICK WAS RIGHT ABOUT ONE THING, THOUGH. I WAS AFRAID. BUT I'M NOT WHO, OR WHAT, HE THINKS I AM.
SHE'S DYING BACK HERE! SHE NEEDS A DOCTOR!
I WOULD TEND TO AGREE WITH YOU. BUT WE HAVE TO TRUST ASIA. WE HAVE TO HAVE FAITH!
SHE'S OBVIOUSLY NOT IN HER RIGHT MIND! SHE'S GOING TO DIE IF SHE DOESN'T GET HELP!
WE ALL WILL. THERE'S NO HOPE FOR ANYONE IF I DON'T DO THIS.
ASIA, PLEASE! YOU'RE SCARING ME. I DREAMED THIS. I DREAMED YOU WOULD DIE!
IT WILL BE OKAY, DANI, I PROMISE. I'VE WASTED SO MUCH OF MY LIFE BEING WRONG, BEING ANGRY...AT MOM, MY FATHER, MY FRIENDS...THE WORLD.
ALWAYS BLAMING SOMEONE ELSE. I'VE BEEN SO WRONG...ABOUT EVERYTHING ... SUCH A WASTE. THIS IS MY CHANCE...TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT.

ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS?
CAN'T RISK BEING SEEN...GOING THROUGH THE FRONT GATE.
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT. I MEAN THIS PLAN OF YOURS, WHATEVER IT IS. I NEED YOUR REASSURANCE THAT I'M NOT JUST DRAGGING YOU TO YOUR GRAVE.
NOT MY GRAVE.
WE...HAVE TO HURRY...

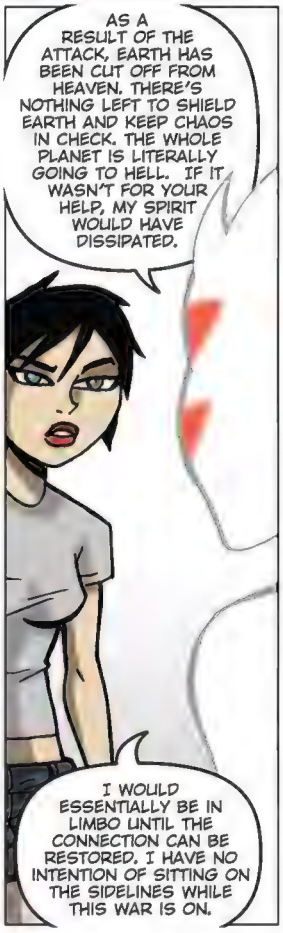

R.I.P.
ASIA, THIS IS ENOUGH! YOU'RE BLEEDING TO DEATH! I'M NOT GOING TO WATCH YOU DIE JUST BECAUSE YOU ASKED ME TO!
SHE'S RIGHT. I CAN'T LET THIS GO ON ANY LONGER IN GOOD CONSCIENCE. EVEN MY FAITH HAS LIMITS. WE'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR OVER AN HOUR AND NOT FOUND WHATEVER IT IS YOU'RE LOOKING FOR.
IT'S OVER. THIS IS IT.

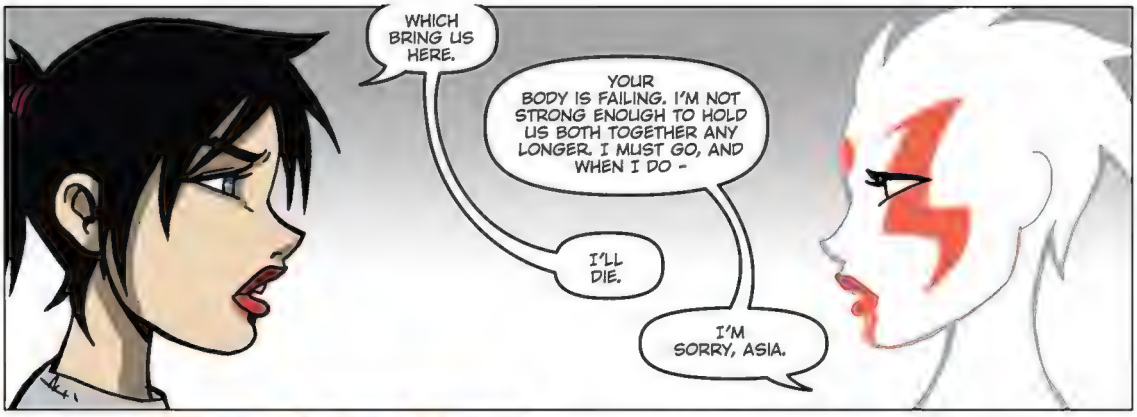
HNNN...
BLECH!!
THAT'S IT, ASIA! WE'RE GOING!
LET GO OF ME!
BLECH!!
ASIA, PLEASE...

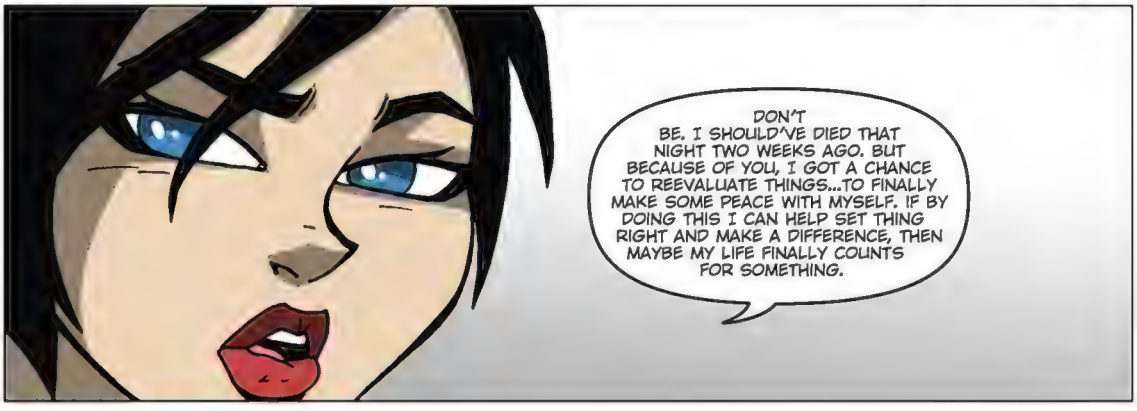
HUH?


HELLO, ASIA.
I'VE DONE WHAT YOU ASKED. I BROUGHT YOU HERE. NOW LET ME SEE MY MOTHER.
YOU WILL BE WITH YOUR MOM SOON ENOUGH. I JUST WANTED TO SEE YOU FACE TO FACE...TO TELL YOU THANK YOU.
IT'S NOT LIKE I HAD MUCH OF A CHOICE.

I KNOW, AND I'M SORRY FOR THAT. THINGS HAVE TAKEN A TURN FOR THE WORSE. THE WAR IN HEAVEN HAS ESCALATED. THERE WAS AN ATTACK...THE REBELLION HIT US HARD.
I WAS INJURED, THROWN TO EARTH. AS FATE WOULD HAVE IT, YOU WERE IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME. WHEN I FOUND YOU, YOU WERE ALL BUT DEAD. BUT BY JOINING WITH YOU, I WAS ABLE TO KEEP US BOTH ALIVE UNTIL...
I DON'T UNDERSTAND. YOU'RE LIKE A SPIRIT, RIGHT? WHY CAN'T YOU JUST ZOOM BACK UP TO HEAVEN OR WHATEVER IT IS YOU DO?


AS A RESULT OF THE ATTACK, EARTH HAS BEEN CUT OFF FROM HEAVEN. THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO SHIELD EARTH AND KEEP CHAOS IN CHECK. THE WHOLE PLANET IS LITERALLY GOING TO HELL. IF IT WASN'T FOR YOUR HELP, MY SPIRIT WOULD HAVE DISSIPATED.
I WOULD ESSENTIALLY BE IN LIMBO UNTIL THE CONNECTION CAN BE RESTORED. I HAVE NO INTENTION OF SITTING ON THE SIDELINES WHILE THIS WAR IS ON.


WHICH BRING US HERE.
YOUR BODY IS FAILING. I'M NOT STRONG ENOUGH TO HOLD US BOTH TOGETHER ANY LONGER. I MUST GO, AND WHEN I DO -
I'LL DIE.
I'M SORRY, ASIA.


DON'T BE. I SHOULD'VE DIED THAT NIGHT TWO WEEKS AGO. BUT BECAUSE OF YOU, I GOT A CHANCE TO REEVALUATE THINGS...TO FINALLY MAKE SOME PEACE WITH MYSELF. IF BY DOING THIS I CAN HELP SET THING RIGHT AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE, THEN MAYBE MY LIFE FINALLY COUNTS FOR SOMETHING.

YOUR MOTHER IS WAITING TO SEE YOU. GOODBYE, ASIA.

AAAA

NO!
ASIA, NO! PLEASE, NO!
MOM? MOM IS THAT YOU? I'VE GOT SO MUCH TO TELL YOU. I'VE MISSED YOU SO MUCH.
ASIA? ASIA? NO!
RRRRMMMM!!
KKRRRRK!

WHAT IS SHE DOING IN THERE?
NO IDEA.

BUT IF SHE DOESN'T HURRY, THERE WON'T BE ANYONE LEFT TO SAVE.

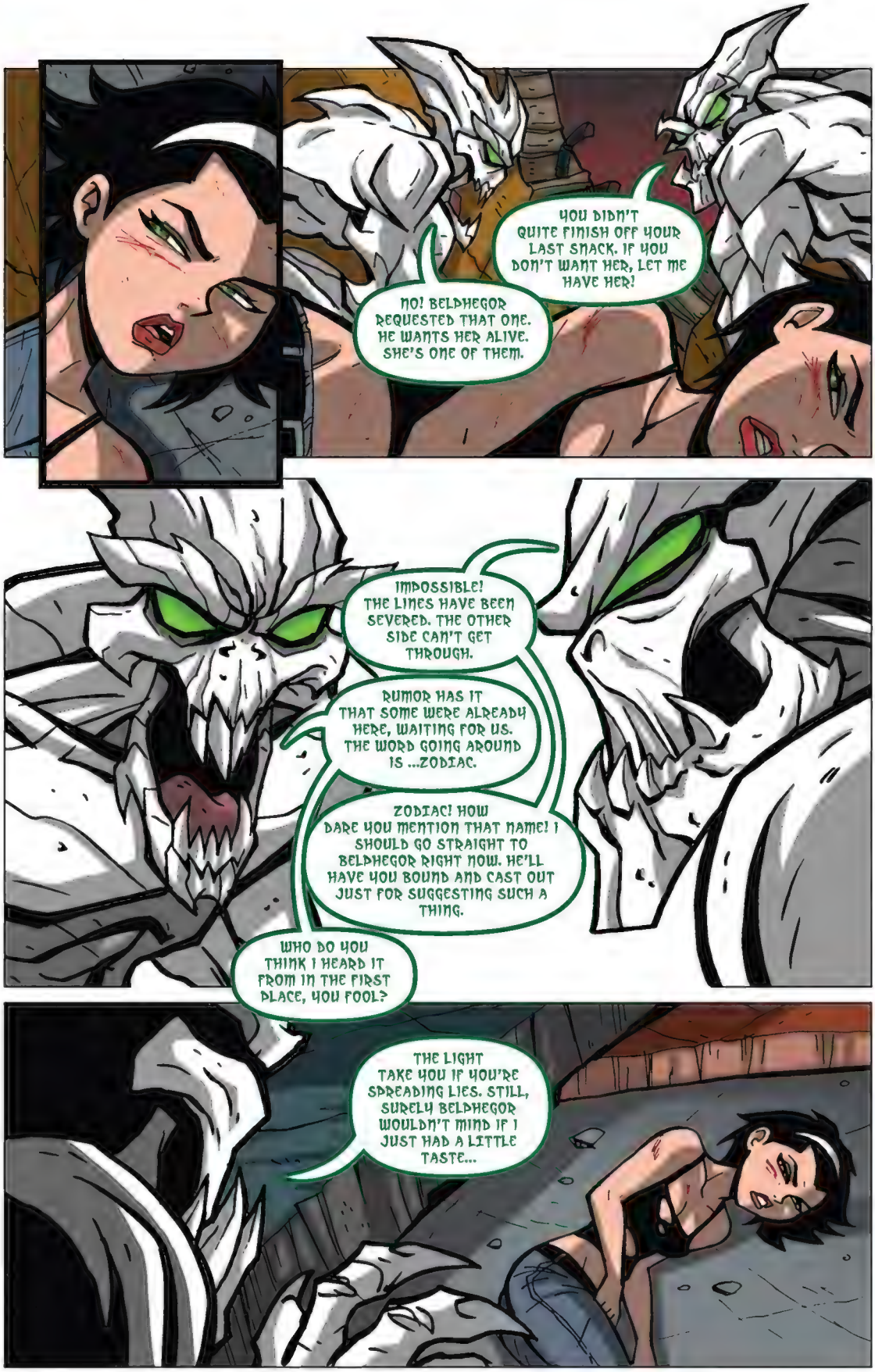
CHAPTER 5
WHY DON'T YOU LET ME WORRY ABOUT THAT?

MAINTEN

WAIT. WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
ON A DATE. WHERE DOES IT LOOK LIKE I'M GOING?
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT. WE'RE COMING, TOO.
AFRAID NOT. YOU TWO ARE GOING TO GET BACK IN THE CAR AND DRIVE STRAIGHT OUT OF TOWN.
THE HELL I AM. THOSE MONSTERS STILL HAVE MY DAUGHTER.
I'M NOT LEAVING MY FAMILY!
I WILL DO WHAT I CAN TO SAVE YOUR LOVED ONES. I PROMISE. BUT THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO TO HELP ME. YOU'LL JUST BE IN THE WAY.
I LEFT MY OWN FLESH AND BLOOD TO THE MERCY OF DEMONS FROM HELL AND THEN HAD TO WATCH A YOUNG GIRL DIE A SLOW AGONIZING DEATH ALL JUST SO YOU COULD RETURN TO THE LAND OF THE LIVING. I THINK YOU OWE ME.

I APPRECIATE WHAT YOU'VE DONE. I *REALLY* DO. BUT THIS IS NOT ABOUT WHAT I OWE YOU. THIS IS ABOUT DOING WHAT I NEED TO DO TO MAKE SURE THE ENTIRE PLANET DOESN'T END UP IN HELL'S *TROPHY CASE*. SO DO ME - *AND HUMANITY*- A FAVOR, AND STAY OUT OF MY WAY.
YOU KNOW, YOU'RE *NOTHING* LIKE HE SAID YOU WERE. TO HEAR HIM TALK, YOU WOULD THINK YOU WERE THE VIRGIN MARY, MOTHER THERESA, AND JOAN OF ARC ALL ROLLED INTO ONE.
WHO'S *HE*?
IT'S NOT IMPORTANT.
NO. YOU CAN'T GET AWAY WITH THAT. WHO ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
WHEN I WAS RESEARCHING MY BOOK, A MAN CAME TO ME. SAID HE WANTED TO TELL HIS STORY. IT WAS THE MOST OUTRAGEOUS STORY I'D EVER HEARD - ZOMBIES, DEMONS, *RESURRECTED TEENAGERS*, ALL WRAPPED UP IN A BATTLE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL. AS CRAZY AS IT WAS, I *BELIEVED* HIM. I LOOKED INTO HIS EYES, AND I BELIEVED EVERY WORD.
EVERY LINE IN HIS FACE, EVERY SCAR ON HIS BODY, EVERY TEAR HE SHED GAVE TESTAMENT TO THE STORY HE TOLD ME. THE MAN WAS *DESPERATE* TO UNBURDEN HIMSELF WITH THE LIFE HE LED, THE MISTAKES HE'D MADE. I DON'T KNOW WHY HE CHOSE ME, BUT HE DID. AFTER THAT, MY BOOK PRETTY MUCH WROTE ITSELF.
HE ONLY HAD ONE REQUEST OF ME. NO MATTER WHAT I DID, NO MATTER WHAT I WROTE, I WAS TO PROTECT ONE PERSON. THIS PERSON'S NAME, THEIR LIFE, WAS OFF LIMITS. *ONE* NAME AND *ONE* NAME ONLY. *NARA LEIGH KILDAY*.
I HONORED HIS REQUEST. I KEPT YOU OUT OF MY BOOK, MS. KILDAY. AFTER ALL I'VE DONE, I DON'T THINK IT'S TOO MUCH TO ASK TO COME WITH YOU. *LET ME HELP*. I *WANT* TO FIGHT. I WANT TO TAKE THESE BASTARDS DOWN AS MUCH AS YOU DO.
...*NOEL*...
YOU WANT TO HELP? FINE. THEN GET OUT OF TOWN AND FIND NOEL. TELL HIM -
I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS. THE LAST TIME I SAW HIM WAS OVER TWO YEARS AGO. HE LEFT WITHOUT TELLING ME WHERE HE WAS HEADED. THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO.
I'M SORRY, HENRICK. THIS IS THE WAY IT HAS TO BE.
GET IN THE CAR, DANI.
BUT -
DO IT!

I PRAY TO GOD YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING. IF THAT GIRL DIED FOR NOTHING - IF MY *DAUGHTER* DIES FOR NOTHING -


YOU DIDN'T QUITE FINISH OFF YOUR LAST SNACK. IF YOU DON'T WANT HER, LET ME HAVE HER!
NO! BELPHEGOR REQUESTED THAT ONE. HE WANTS HER ALIVE. SHE'S ONE OF THEM.
IMPOSSIBLE! THE LINES HAVE BEEN SEVERED. THE OTHER SIDE CAN'T GET THROUGH.
RUMOR HAS IT THAT SOME WERE ALREADY HERE, WAITING FOR US. THE WORD GOING AROUND IS ...ZODIAC.
ZODIAC! HOW DARE YOU MENTION THAT NAME! I SHOULD GO STRAIGHT TO BELPHEGOR RIGHT NOW. HE'LL HAVE YOU BOUND AND CAST OUT JUST FOR SUGGESTING SUCH A THING.
WHO DO YOU THINK I HEARD IT FROM IN THE FIRST PLACE, YOU FOOL?
THE LIGHT TAKE YOU IF YOU'RE SPREADING LIES. STILL, SURELY BELPHEGOR WOULDN'T MIND IF I JUST HAD A LITTLE TASTE...

KRAKK!
HRRRGGGG
HUUUUHHH!
THWAK!

LOOKS LIKE WE MIGHT NOT BE GOING ANYWHERE AT ALL.
IF I WERE THE PARANOID TYPE, I WOULD SAY SOMEONE DOESN'T WANT US TO LEAVE.
AAAAAHH!

HEY. JUST TAKE IT EASY, OKAY?
...NARA?
YEAH, IT'S ME.
SMAK!
HOW DARE YOU! YOU THINK YOU CAN JUST KEEP DOING THIS TO ME? POPPING IN AND OUT OF MY LIFE LIKE IT'S SOME SORT OF GAME! WHERE WERE YOU WHEN I NEEDED YOU THE MOST?
HAZY, LISTEN -
NO! NO EXCUSES! YOU CAN'T KEEP DOING THIS TO ME! WHERE THE HELL WERE YOU DAMN IT?
I WAS SO ALONE, WHAT WAS I SUPPOSED TO DO?
IT'S NOT FAIR. WHERE WERE YOU WHEN I NEEDED YOU?

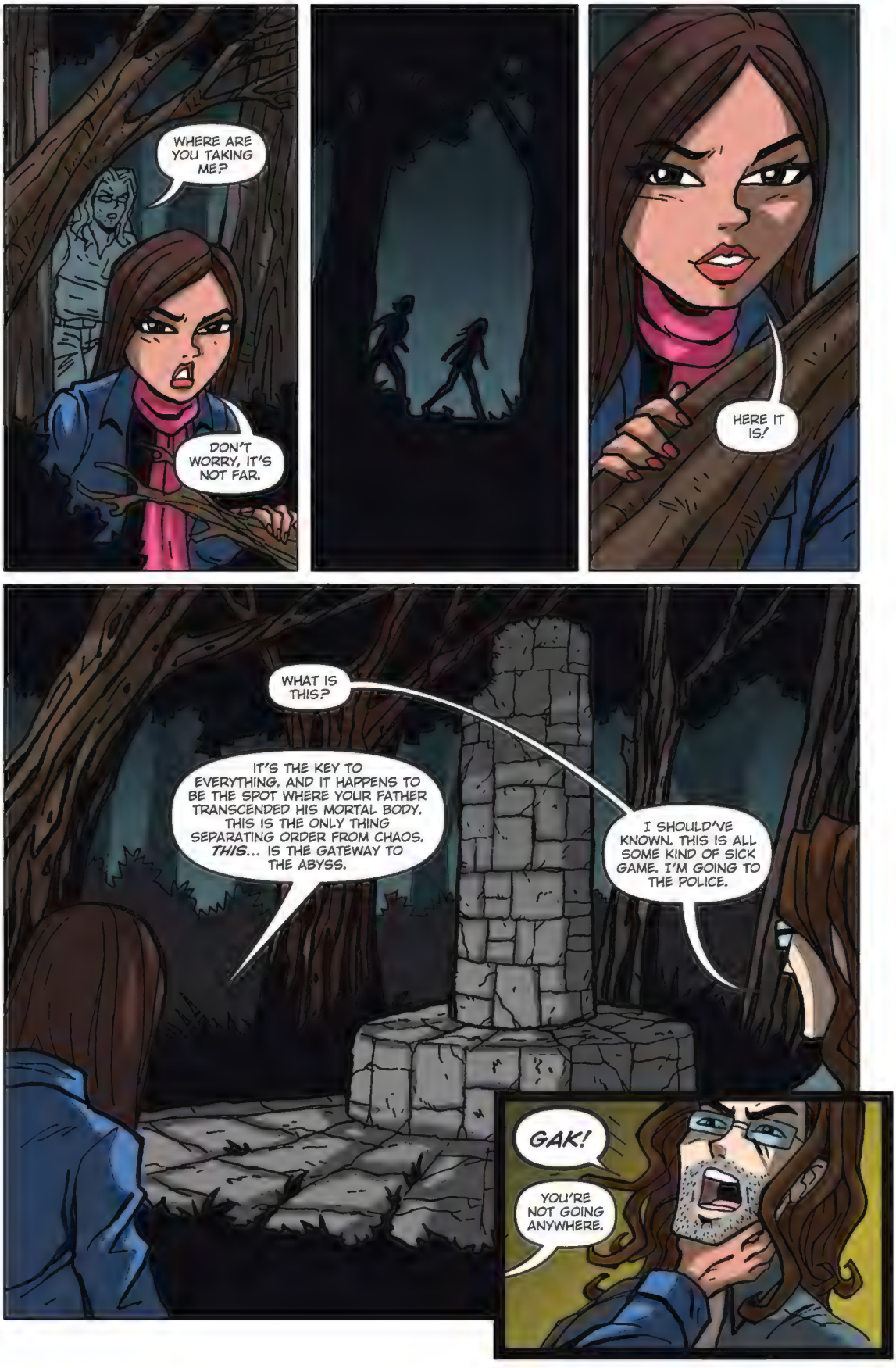
abyss
abaddon
destroyer
YOU WON'T FIND WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR IN ANY OF THOSE BOOKS.
HOW DID YOU GET IN HERE? WHO ARE YOU?

RELAX. I JUST CAME TO PICK UP SOMETHING THAT BELONGS TO A FRIEND OF MINE.
NOT SO FAST.
THUK!
AAAAAAAH!!-!
WHAT THE HELL? WHO ARE YOU!
I DIDN'T WANT TO DO THAT. I HAD HOPED WE COULD BE CIVIL ABOUT THIS.
SECURITY WILL HAVE HEARD ME SCREAM. THEY'LL BE HERE ANY MINUTE!
AFRAID NOT. THEY'RE ALL DEAD.
WHAT? WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?
JUST THIS.

LET ME TELL YOU A STORY, ABOUT A MAN WHO'S BEEN HAVING A BIT OF A PERSONAL CRISIS. HE USED TO BE VERY SECURE IN HIS WORLDVIEW. HE THOUGHT HE HAD IT ALL FIGURED OUT.
A SELF-DESCRIBED MAN OF LOGIC AND SCIENCE, HAVING NO USE FOR NOTIONS SUCH AS FAITH OR BELIEF IN SOMETHING HIGHER THAN HIMSELF - ALL BECAUSE OF HIS DISDAIN FOR HIS FATHER. HE TOLD HIMSELF HE WOULD NEVER BE LIKE HIM.
YET HERE HE SITS, COWERING IN THE DARK, HUDDLED OVER ANCIENT TEXTS TRYING TO DECIPHER THE MEANING OF A ROCK THAT FELL FROM THE SKY.
MY FATHER WAS A SUPERSTITIOUS FOOL JUMPING AT SHADOWS. I AM *NOTHING* LIKE HIM.
AND YOU'RE JUST AS ARROGANT AS HE WAS. WHAT IF I TOLD YOU THERE WAS A WAY FOR YOU TO SEE HIM AGAIN?
I'M BEING QUITE SERIOUS. COOPERATE WITH ME. LET ME TAKE WHAT I CAME FOR AND I WILL TAKE YOU TO YOUR FATHER.
YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY INSANE.
I'M CALLING THE POLICE.
GO AHEAD. I'M SURE THEY'D LOVE TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR LITTLE HIT AND RUN A FEW WEEKS BACK.
HOW DID YOU -
IT'S NOT IMPORTANT. WHAT IS IMPORTANT IS YOUR FATHER. YOU'VE HEARD HIM CRYING OUT TO YOU IN YOUR DREAMS, HAVEN'T YOU? EVEN WHEN YOU'RE AWAKE, YOU HEAR HIM. HE NEEDS YOU ZACH.
PARDON ME IF I DON'T JUMP OUT OF MY CHAIR. HE WAS A MISERABLE HUMAN BEING WHO WILL GET NO SYMPATHY FROM ME. EVEN IF WHAT YOU'RE SAYING IS TRUE, THAT HE'S SOMEHOW ALIVE, I HAVE NO DESIRE TO SEE OR TALK TO HIM.
I'M OFFERING YOU THE CHANCE TO TELL HIM THAT TO HIS FACE, TO TELL HIM HOW YOU *REALLY* FEEL. TELL HIM ALL THE THINGS YOU'VE BEEN BOTTLING UP FOR ALL THESE YEARS. *SPIT* IN HIS FACE FOR ALL I CARE. YOU CAN'T TELL ME YOU WOULD PASS UP THAT CHANCE.
I TOLD YOU. I DON'T BELIEVE YOU.
COME WITH ME, ZACH. YOU'RE A MAN OF TRUTH. YOU'LL NEVER REST UNTIL YOU KNOW FOR CERTAIN.

ELIJAH AND I WERE MARRIED A FEW WEEKS AFTER... AFTER YOU DIED. WE WERE STARTING TO MAKE A LIFE FOR OURSELVES AND REALLY PUT EVERYTHING BEHIND US. THEN THE BABY WAS BORN.
SHE WAS SO BEAUTIFUL, NARA. SHE MADE US COMPLETE. BUT ELIJAH WANTED TO GIVE HER A FUTURE, MAKE SURE SHE NEVER WENT WITHOUT. SO HE ENLISTED. THE PLAN WAS TO SERVE JUST LONG ENOUGH TO PAY FOR COLLEGE.
BUT I THINK THERE WAS SOMETHING ELSE IN IT FOR HIM. I THINK THERE WAS SOMETHING DEEP DOWN INSIDE HE HAD TO DEAL WITH. HE ALWAYS FELT SO POWERLESS WHEN IT CAME TO ALL THE THINGS THAT HAVE HAPPENED TO ME AND YOU. I THINK IT WAS HIS WAY OF TRYING TO MAKE UP FOR THAT -
BY TRYING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD.
HE DIED LAST YEAR IN IRAQ. HE WAS GUARDING A SCHOOL WHEN SOME *LUNATIC* SENT IN HIS OWN KID WITH A BOMB IN HIS BACKPACK. I THOUGHT YOU AND I HAD SEEN EVIL - BUT THAT... THERE'S NO WORDS FOR THAT.
IT *DESTROYED* ME, NARA.
THE BABY?
I COULDN'T DO IT ANYMORE. I COULDN'T TAKE CARE OF HER. SHE DESERVED A BETTER LIFE THAN I COULD EVER GIVE HER.
YOU GAVE HER AWAY.
I DIDN'T WANT TO DO IT, BUT I HAD TO. I WAS FALLING APART. SINCE THEN . . . I'VE DONE SOME *TERRIBLE* THINGS. I'M NOT THE SAME PERSON I USED TO BE. I HAD TO CHANGE. I COULDN'T LIVE AS THE OLD HAZY ANYMORE, NOT IF I WAS GOING TO SURVIVE.

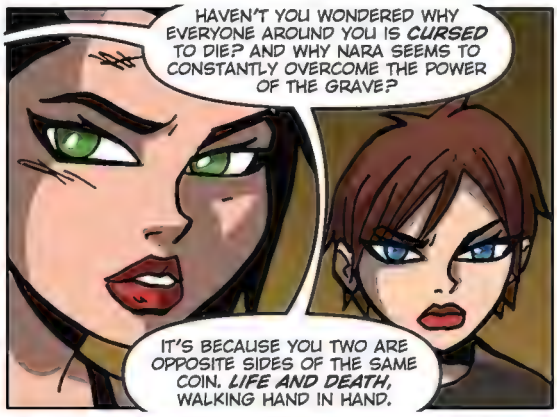
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
WHAT I'M SAYING IS THAT I DON'T CARE HOW OR WHY YOU'RE HERE. I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU ANYMORE. I JUST WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE.
YOU DON'T MEAN THAT.
I'VE BEEN CURSED SINCE THE DAY I MET YOU.
AAIIIEE!
KRASH
URRRGGGG

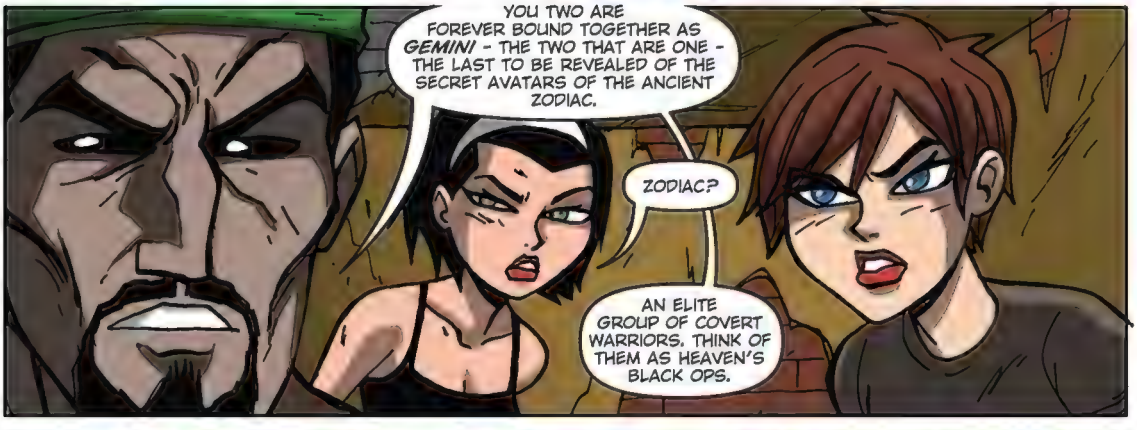

WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME?
DON'T WORRY, IT'S NOT FAR.
HERE IT IS!
WHAT IS THIS?
IT'S THE KEY TO EVERYTHING. AND IT HAPPENS TO BE THE SPOT WHERE YOUR FATHER TRANSCENDED HIS MORTAL BODY. THIS IS THE ONLY THING SEPARATING ORDER FROM CHAOS. *THIS*... IS THE GATEWAY TO THE ABYSS.
I SHOULD'VE KNOWN. THIS IS ALL SOME KIND OF SICK GAME. I'M GOING TO THE POLICE.
GAK!
YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE.

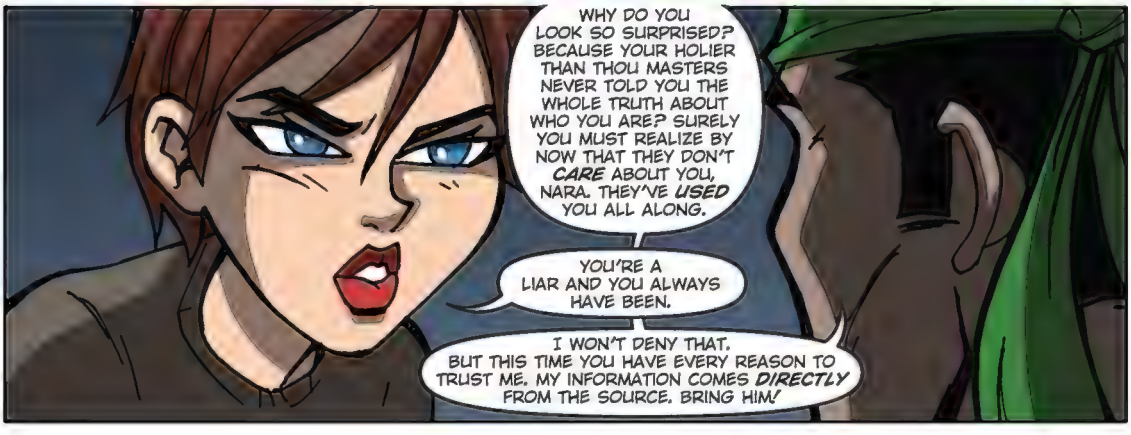
SEE? TOLD YOU.
DON'T BE SO HARD ON HER, HAZY.
SHE'S JUST BLINDLY FOLLOWING ORDERS FROM UP ON HIGH, JUST LIKE SHE ALWAYS HAS. SHE'S NOTHING LIKE YOU - BRAVE AND INDEPENDENT, ALWAYS QUESTIONING, SEARCHING.
DO I KNOW YOU?
HE'S BELPHEGOR. A DEMON GENERAL. AND UNTIL A FEW DAYS AGO, HE AND HIS ENTIRE ARMY WERE MY PRISONERS.
NEVER SAW IT COMING, DID YOU? THE BREAK-OUT. I KNOW YOU LOST A LOT OF FRIENDS IN THE ATTACK. BUT I'M VERY HAPPY TO SEE YOU MADE OUT IN ONE PIECE. AFTER ALL, WE NEEDED YOU TO LEAD US TO HER.
ME?

YOU SEE, WHEN OUR PRISON *TARTARUS* WAS DESTROYED, SETTING ME FREE AND NARA HERE TUMBLING TO EARTH, AN IMPORTANT ARTIFACT WAS FINALLY FREED FROM THE CLUTCHES OF THE ENEMY.
IT IS SOMETHING WE HAVE BEEN TRYING TO OBTAIN FOR *THOUSANDS* OF YEARS - THE *KEY TO THE ABYSS.*
THAT DARK CHASM IS THE RESTING PLACE OF OUR LORD AND PROPHET EBRU LABADON, KNOWN AS ABADDON, *THE THIRTEENTH BROTHER.*

UNFORTUNATELY THE KEY IS DEADLY AND CANNOT BE USED BY JUST ANYONE. IN FACT, IT WAS DESIGNED TO BE USED BY ONLY ONE UNIQUE BEING IN ALL THE UNIVERSE. *THE TWO THAT ARE ONE.* ONE WHO WALKS WITH DEATH AND ONE OVER WHOM DEATH HOLDS NO POWER. ONLY THEY CAN WIELD THE KEY AND UNLOCK THE ABYSS.

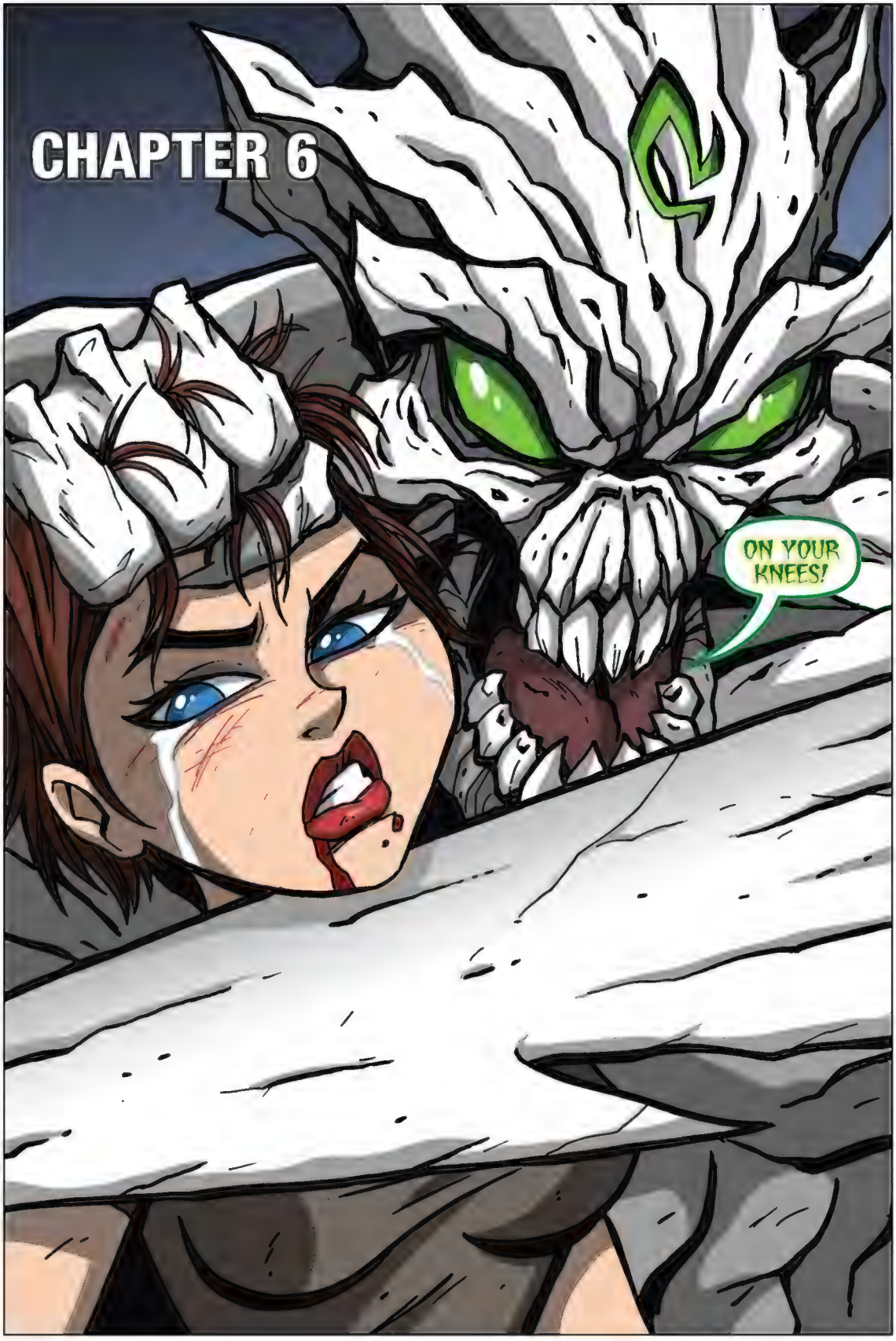

HAVEN'T YOU WONDERED WHY EVERYONE AROUND YOU IS *CURSED* TO DIE? AND WHY NARA SEEMS TO CONSTANTLY OVERCOME THE POWER OF THE GRAVE?
IT'S BECAUSE YOU TWO ARE OPPOSITE SIDES OF THE SAME COIN. *LIFE AND DEATH,* WALKING HAND IN HAND.

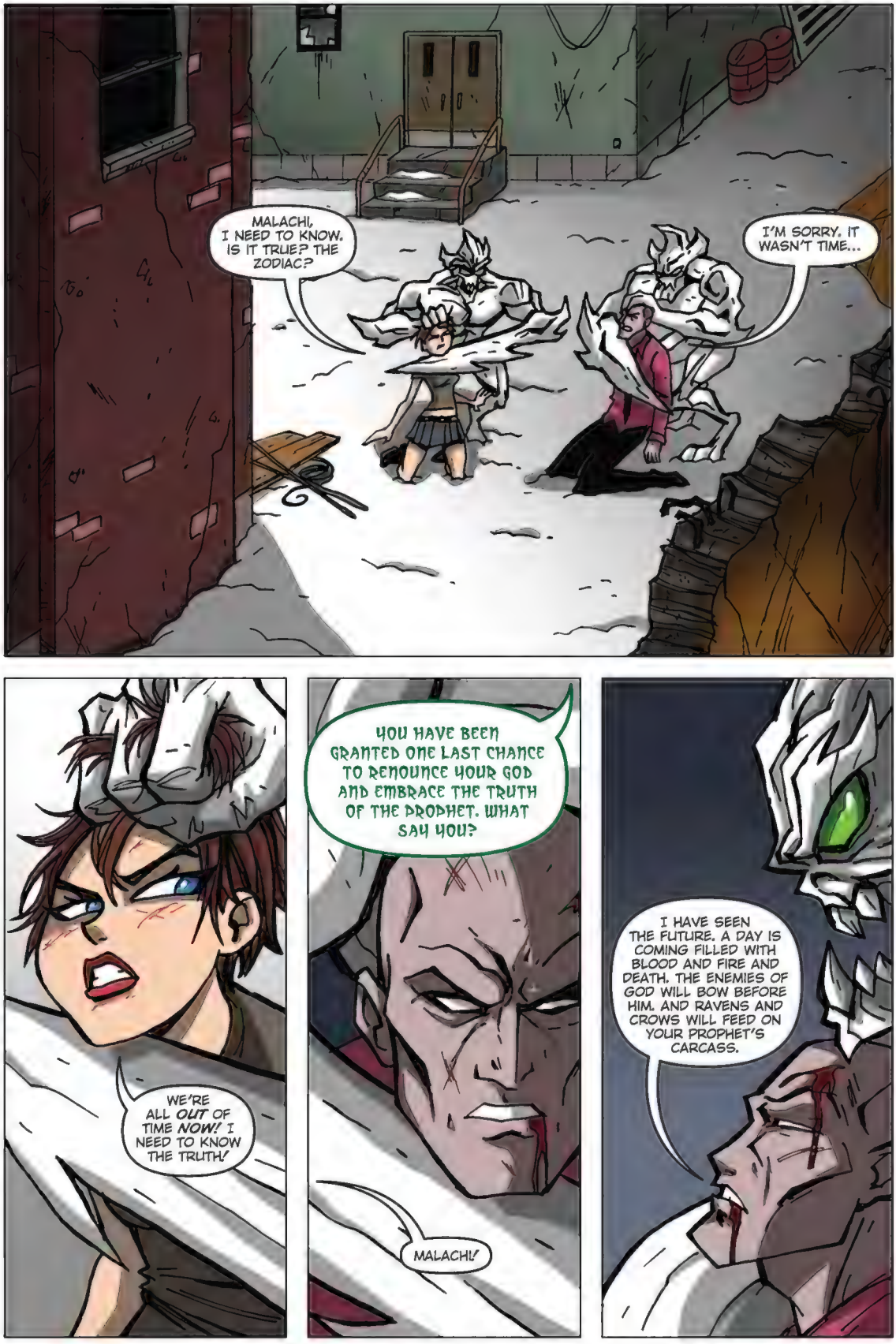

YOU TWO ARE FOREVER BOUND TOGETHER AS *GEMINI* - THE TWO THAT ARE ONE - THE LAST TO BE REVEALED OF THE SECRET AVATARS OF THE ANCIENT ZODIAC.
ZODIAC?
AN ELITE GROUP OF COVERT WARRIORS. THINK OF THEM AS HEAVEN'S BLACK OPS.


WHY DO YOU LOOK SO SURPRISED? BECAUSE YOUR HOLIER THAN THOU MASTERS NEVER TOLD YOU THE WHOLE TRUTH ABOUT WHO YOU ARE? SURELY YOU MUST REALIZE BY NOW THAT THEY DON'T *CARE* ABOUT YOU, NARA. THEY'VE *USED* YOU ALL ALONG.
YOU'RE A LIAR AND YOU ALWAYS HAVE BEEN.
I WON'T DENY THAT. BUT THIS TIME YOU HAVE EVERY REASON TO TRUST ME. MY INFORMATION COMES *DIRECTLY* FROM THE SOURCE. BRING HIM!

MALACHI!
OR AS WE KNOW HIM - LEO, LEADER THE ZODIAC.
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO HIM?
MUCH LIKE YOU, HE'S LOST SOME OF HIS LUSTER SINCE FALLING TO EARTH. HE CAN BLEED JUST LIKE THE REST OF US.
WE'RE NOT OPENING THAT DAMNED ABYSS. WE'LL DIE FIRST.
DON'T SPEAK FOR HAZY. SHE GETS A SAY IN THIS, TOO.
CUTE. BUT BEFORE YOU JOIN NARA'S LITTLE CRUSADE, YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT THE ABYSS HOLDS MORE THAN THE THIRTEENTH BROTHER.
IT'S THE REPOSITORY OF ALL THE SOULS WHO HAVE DIED ON EARTH, WHERE THEY ARE DOOMED TO REMAIN IMPRISONED UNTIL JUDGMENT DAY WHEN THE HEAVENLY TYRANT WILL CAST THEM INTO ETERNAL TORMENT.
BUT IF YOU WERE TO USE THE KEY AND SET THEM FREE... THEY WOULDN'T HAVE TO SUFFER THE SECOND DEATH. YOU COULD BE REUNITED WITH ALL OF THOSE YOU HAVE LOST -
ELIJAH...
YES, EVEN YOUR BROTHER, YOUR PARENTS. YOU CAN SAVE THEM ALL, HAZY. HAVEN'T YOU SUFFERED ENOUGH? DON'T YOU DESERVE TO BE WITH THOSE YOU LOVE?

DON'T LISTEN TO HIM, HAZY! HE'LL SAY ANYTHING TO GET TO YOU!
SWAK!
DISPOSE OF THEM.


CHAPTER 6
ON YOUR KNEES!


MALACHI, I NEED TO KNOW. IS IT TRUE? THE ZODIAC?
I'M SORRY. IT WASN'T TIME...
WE'RE ALL *OUT* OF TIME *NOW!* I NEED TO KNOW THE TRUTH!
YOU HAVE BEEN GRANTED ONE LAST CHANCE TO RENOUNCE YOUR GOD AND EMBRACE THE TRUTH OF THE PROPHET. WHAT SAY YOU?
MALACHI!
I HAVE SEEN THE FUTURE. A DAY IS COMING FILLED WITH BLOOD AND FIRE AND DEATH. THE ENEMIES OF GOD WILL BOW BEFORE HIM. AND RAVENS AND CROWS WILL FEED ON YOUR PROPHET'S CARCASS.

SHUKT!
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? KILL ME YOU SON OF A-
GLORY TO THE PROPHET!
RRIP
THUK!
KA-THAK!

UH?
THAGG!
UUKK!
AAAAH!
WHOA!

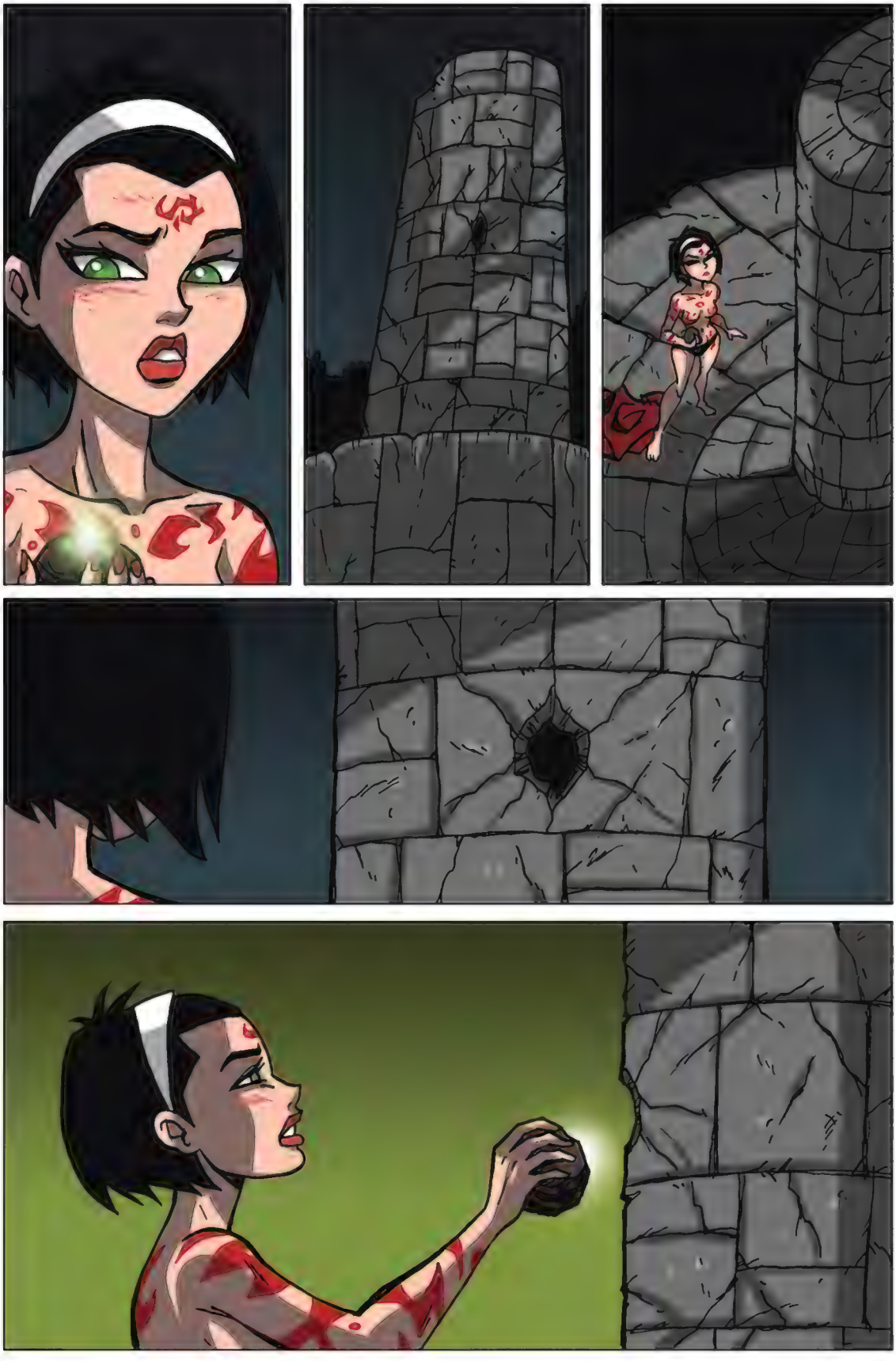
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? WHERE YOU JUST GOING TO STAND THERE WHILE I LOST MY HEAD?
LOOKED LIKE YOU HAD EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL.
WHAT HAPPENED? WHERE'S DANI?
SHE'S ONE OF THEM. AS SOON AS YOU WERE GONE SHE MADE HER MOVE.
WHO WAS HE?
A FRIEND.
YOU MEAN, FROM UP THERE? WAS HE -
NO. NOT AN ANGEL. YOU KNOW, I DON'T EVEN KNOW FOR SURE. THAT WAS THE THING ABOUT MALACHI, OR WINSTON, OR LEO, WHATEVER HIS NAME WAS - HE NEVER WAS MUCH OF A STRAIGHT TALKER. BUT HE WAS ALWAYS THERE WHEN I NEEDED HIM.
I CAME BACK FOR MY DAUGHTER. I'VE SEEN ENOUGH DEATH FOR ONE NIGHT. I'M NOT GOING TO BURY HER, TOO.
I UNDERSTAND. BUT I CAN'T HELP YOU.
I KNOW. YOU'VE GOTTA FIX THIS MESS, RIGHT?
YEAH. ONLY, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG TIME, I DON'T KNOW WHAT I'M SUPPOSED TO DO NEXT. I'M SO USED TO HAVING... SOMEONE I CAN TURN TO.
THE GIRL LEFT THIS BEHIND.
ZACH

DOES IT MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU?
YES... IT DOES. THANK YOU.
DON'T THANK ME. NEITHER ONE OF US WOULD BE HERE RIGHT NOW IF IT WASN'T FOR ASIA. DON'T EVER FORGET WHAT SHE DID FOR YOU.
I WON'T. THANKS, HENRICK. I HOPE YOU FIND YOUR DAUGHTER.
GODSPEED, NARA.
...ASIA!
GOOD WORK, MY FRIEND. THIS DAY HAS BEEN A LONG TIME COMING. MAY THE PROPHET GREATLY REWARD YOU.

WHO THE HELL ARE *YOU?*
IS THIS THE ONE?
YES. HE WAS A DISAPPOINTMENT TO ME AS WELL.
THE PROPHET HAS HIS REASONS. WE MUST TRUST HIM.
PROPHET? *THE ONE?* WHO ARE YOU PEOPLE?
YOU HAVE BEEN *CHOSEN.*
BY WHO? FOR *WHAT?* A LOT OF PEOPLE KNOW WHO I AM AND WHERE I AM, SO IF THIS IS SOME KIND OF CULT-SACRIFICE THING, YOU'D BETTER *RE-THINK* WHAT YOU'RE ABOUT TO DO!
YOUR FATHER CHOSE YOU.
AND I SUPPOSE THIS WAS DONE... BEYOND THE *GRAVE.*
YES. AFTER HIS DEAL WITH THE *LESSER* DEMON BOLABOGG WENT HORRIBLY WRONG, YOUR FATHER HAS BEEN A RESTLESS, *WANDERING* SPIRIT. HE HAS BEEN MANY PLACES, *SEEN* MANY THINGS.
THROUGH CUNNING AND TRICKERY, HE WAS ABLE TO GATHER INFORMATION ON HEAVEN'S TROOP MOVEMENTS, HIDDEN PRISONS, EVEN THE LOCATION OF THE *KEY TO THE ABYSS.* HE APPROACHED US, THE SERVANTS OF THE PROPHET, AND OFFERED THIS INFORMATION IN EXCHANGE FOR THE POWER TO ENTER THE PHYSICAL WORLD AGAIN. A DEAL WAS STRUCK, BUT NOT BEFORE THE PROPHET ASKED FOR ONE MORE THING IN RETURN. *YOU.*
ME?
ONCE WE SET HIM FREE OF THE ABYSS, THE PROPHET WILL NEED A BODY TO INHABIT. YOUR FATHER OFFERED UP YOU, HIS ONLY SON. *BRING HIM!*

OH MY GOD!
I KNOW, AN APPALLING SIGHT. IT WILL TAKE TIME FOR HIS PHYSICAL FORM TO COMPLETELY RE-CONSTITUTE ITSELF. AFTER ALL, WE ONLY HAD THE REMAINS OF HIS HEAD TO START WITH. BUT IN TIME HE'LL BE AS GOOD AS NEW. WELL, GOOD ENOUGH.
YOU GODDAMNED FREAKS!
SMAK!
THANK YOU.

NOW, ARE YOU READY TO DO YOUR PART?
I JUST WANT TO BE WITH MY FAMILY AGAIN.
AND YOU WILL. BUT FIRST, YOU MUST OPEN THE GATEWAY. IT'S ALL IN YOUR HANDS NOW.



NO! I CAN'T DO IT! YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO KILL ME.
I WAS AFRAID OF THAT. SO LET ME PUT IT THIS WAY; WHILE YOU MAY NOT VALUE YOUR OWN LIFE, I DOUBT YOU FEEL THE SAME WAY ABOUT YOUR DAUGHTER.
WHAT?
MR. AND MRS. ALEX MASON OF DEARBORN, MICHIGAN. YOUNG COUPLE IN THEIR EARLY THIRTIES, UNABLE TO CONCEIVE AND SEEMINGLY IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME WHEN YOU WERE IN THE MIDST OF YOUR "CRISIS."
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
I'VE PLANNED FOR THIS DAY FOR TOO LONG TO HINGE MY SUCCESS OR FAILURE ON THE PERSONAL WHIMS OF A MISERABLE WASTE OF FLESH LIKE YOURSELF. THE MASONS ARE SERVANTS OF THE PROPHET. ONE PHONE CALL FROM ME AND THEY'LL SNAP YOUR DAUGHTER'S LITTLE NECK.

IF YOU LAY A HAND ON HER, I SWEAR TO GOD...
I'M WAITING.
WHOOSH!

WHAT'S HAPPENING?
NO! THIS ISN'T RIGHT! IT SHOULD HAVE OPENED!
YOU SCREWED UP, BELPHEGOR. THE GATE HAS COLLAPSED. IT WILL TAKE AN ACT OF GOD TO OPEN IT NOW.
NOOO!!
AAAAHH!
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

RRRUUUAAH!!
?

ASIA! I WAS RIGHT. IT WASN'T HAZY. YOU AND I -
THE TWO THAT ARE ONE. ONE WHO WALKS WITH DEATH, AND ONE OVER WHOM DEATH HOLDS NO POWER. GEMINI.
SO BELPHEGOR JUST MISINTERPRETED THE PROPHECY. BUT I THOUGHT I SET YOU FREE. I THOUGHT YOU CROSSED OVER.
I DID. OR I STARTED TO. BUT IT SEEMS I'M TRAPPED HERE. IN FACT, UNTIL THE WAR IS OVER, NO ONE'S SOUL WILL BE ABLE TO GET THROUGH TO THE OTHER SIDE.
BUT OUR CONNECTION IS ACTING LIKE AN ANCHOR, KEEPING MY SPIRIT TETHERED TO YOURS. I GUESS YOU'RE SORT OF MY TEMPORARY HOME.
SO WHAT NOW?
BELPHEGOR IS DEAD, AND HIS ARMY IS IN RETREAT, BUT THIS IS FAR FROM OVER. THIS GATE MAY HAVE COLLAPSED, BUT THERE ARE OTHERS. THEY WILL TRY AGAIN. LIKE IT OR NOT, WE'RE IN THIS FIGHT TOGETHER.
I CAN THINK OF WORSE PEOPLE TO HAVE CO-INHABITING MY BODY.
STAY STRONG, NARA. FOR BOTH OF US.

THE CITY I'VE CALLED HOME MOST OF MY LIFE IS IN RUINS. EVEN IF IT RECOVERS, I DON'T THINK PEOPLE WILL BE ABLE TO IGNORE WHAT'S HAPPENED HERE.
THIS EVIL WE'RE FACING WILL SETTLE FOR NOTHING LESS THAN OUR COMPLETE AND TOTAL EXTERMINATION.
THANKFULLY, THERE ARE GOOD MEN WHO WON'T STAND BY AND LET THAT HAPPEN WITHOUT A FIGHT.
AND I AM PROUD TO STAND WITH THEM.

I FEEL SO FOOLISH. I BELIEVED EVERYTHING HE SAID. AND I NEARLY GOT ALL OF US KILLED IN THE PROCESS.
WE'RE GOING TO FIND YOUR DAUGHTER, HAZY. I PROMISE. I WON'T ABANDON HER TO THOSE MONSTERS.
DON'T SAY THAT. IF I WAS IN YOUR POSITION, I WOULD HAVE DONE THE SAME THING. THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT HE WAS WRONG. YOU'RE NOT GEMINI.
Clothes
Kitchen
BUT I *WANTED* TO BELIEVE HIM. SOME PART OF ME WANTED IT TO BE TRUE.
IF I WAS ACTUALLY SOME KIND OF LIVING EMBODIMENT OF DEATH, IT WOULD HAVE EXPLAINED EVERYTHING. ALL THAT'S HAPPENED, ALL THAT I'VE *LOST*...IT WOULD HAVE FINALLY MADE SOME SENSE.
HAZY, NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, I'LL ALWAYS BE HERE FOR YOU. I THINK YOU KNOW BY NOW THAT NOT EVEN HEAVEN AND HELL CAN COME BETWEEN US.
NARA, THE THINGS I SAID TO YOU - YOU DIDN'T DESERVE IT. I WANT YOU TO KNOW HOW SORRY I AM. I DIDN'T MEAN ANY OF IT.
I KNOW.

SO. WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?
I'M NOT SURE. I GUESS THE FIRST THING IS TO TRY AND FIND THESE OTHER ZODIAC, IF THEY REALLY EXIST. WITH THE KEY DESTROYED NOW -
NARA...
I DON'T THINK THE KEY WAS DESTROYED. I THINK IT JUST... FOUND A NEW HOME.
WHAT?
OH, GOD.
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?
THINGS JUST GOT A LOT MORE COMPLICATED.

I BROUGHT YOU SOME CLOTHES AND SOME OF YOUR PERSONAL EFFECTS FROM THE MANSION.
JUST SET THEM ON THE TABLE.
I SEE YOU'VE WASTED NO TIME IN MODIFYING YOUR APPEARANCE.
I'VE ALWAYS FOUND THAT WHEN MOVING INTO A NEW *HOME*, IT'S BEST TO DO WHATEVER YOU CAN TO MAKE THE PLACE FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE, EVEN IT MEANS BRINGING ALONG A REMINDER FROM THE PAST.
SO THIS... *ARRANGEMENT* IS GOING TO BE PERMANENT, I TAKE IT?
FOR THE TIME BEING.
UNLIKE MY MISGUIDED SON, I HAVE ALWAYS EXCELLED AT ADAPTING TO EXTREME AND UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES.
BESIDES, SURELY YOU CAN SEE THE BEAUTY IN THE REUNION BETWEEN A FATHER AND HIS ESTRANGED SON, BOTH SHARING THE SAME EXISTENCE.
IT'S ALMOST *POETIC.*

BOOK 5

afterbirth

SOMEWHERE... ELSE.
I DON'T LIKE THIS. WE'RE TOO EXPOSED
IT'S ONLY TEMPORARY.
WE'RE TAKING A HUGE RISK CROSSING INTO THE BORDERLANDS LIKE THIS, ENOCH.
I TRUST MY INFORMANT. THE MESSENGER IS COMING.
CHAPTER 1

WE'LL WAIT UNTIL THE NEXT SOLAR CYCLE. AFTER THAT, WE PULL OUT.
WE'VE ALREADY LOST *ONE* AGENT IN THIS WAR. I *WON'T* LOSE ANOTHER.

EARTH. DARLINGTON HILLS, USA.
SERIOUSLY, NARA. YOU MAKE ME SICK. ARE YOU TRYING TO SHOW OFF?
JEALOUS?
NO! I MEAN, YEAH... ACTUALLY I AM! YOU'VE BEEN DEAD TWICE AND STILL HAVE A KILLER BODY. IT'S NOT EXACTLY FAIR.
I BARELY EVEN RECOGNIZED MYSELF AFTER THE BABY. YOU, ON THE OTHER HAND...
I AM CARRYING AROUND THE UNHOLY KEY TO THE ABYSS. YOU WOULD THINK THAT WOULD WARRANT ME A LITTLE UPGRADE IN SOME AREAS, BUT NO!
WELL, I HAVEN'T EXACTLY BEEN SITTING ON THE SIDELINES, YOU KNOW.
THINK OF IT AS GOD'S REWARD TO ME FOR BEING SO AWESOME.

LOOK. I DIDN'T START AGING AGAIN UNTIL ABOUT THREE YEARS AGO. TECHNICALLY, I'M JUST NOW TURNING TWENTY. I'M FINALLY BLOSSOMING INTO WOMANHOOD!
WHAT ARE YOU NOW? ALMOST THIRTY?
NO! AND TECHNICALLY WE'RE THE SAME AGE. WE WERE BORN JUST A FEW MONTHS APART, REMEMBER?
AND NOT ALL OF US GOT TO TAKE A FEW YEARS OFF GALLIVANTING AROUND THE SPIRIT WORLD.
YEAH, WELL...I'M 100 PERCENT HUMAN NOW. NO POWERS. NO SPIRIT FORM.
THE FIGHT AGAINST EVIL WILL HAVE TO GO ON WITH JUST ME & MY AX....
...AND YOUR BIG BUTT!
IS IT DEAD?
LOOKS LIKE IT.

SO YOU DON'T HAVE POWERS. YOU'VE STILL GOT ONE HECK OF A THROWING ARM.
LOT OF GOOD THAT WILL DO US ONCE HELL COMPLETELY OVER-RUNS EARTH. THESE THINGS WILL BE EVERY-WHERE.

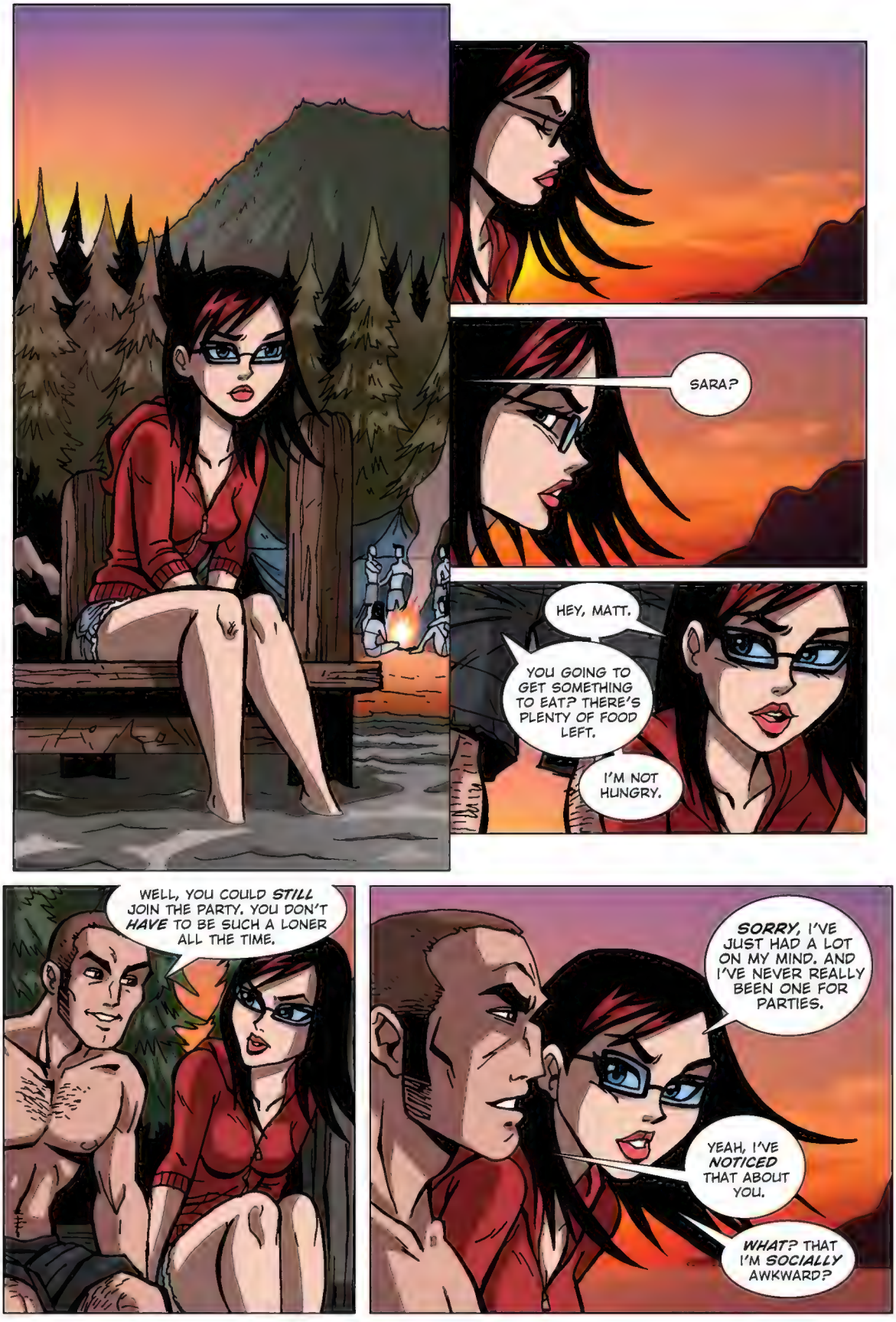
SOMEONE DROPPED THEIR WALLET.
MR. BRYAN BAUGH. APPARENTLY ONE OF THE MARKED AND PROUD OF IT, TOO. YOU DON'T THINK THAT -
- THAT WHAT?
#45898510
HT: 5-9
EYES: BRN
SEX: M

...THAT THE APPEARANCE OF THE MARK IS ACTUALLY THE FIRST STAGE OF FULL *DEMONIC TRANSMOGRIFICATION* AND NOT JUST THE MANIFESTATION OF A RELATIVELY *HARMLESS* DISEASE OR *VIRUS* LIKE WE'VE BEEN TOLD?

YEAH.
WELL, MR. BRYAN BAUGH EITHER *HULKED OUT* INTO GOAT-MAN HERE OR BECAME HIS *DINNER*.
AND SINCE I'VE NEVER KNOWN THE FORCES OF HELL TO WEAR *DOCKERS*, I'M *DEFINITELY* BETTING ON THE FORMER.

WE SHOULD PROBABLY GET BACK TO THE BEACH BEFORE ANYONE COMES LOOKING FOR US.

YAY. TIME TO SWITCH BACK TO *CLARK KENT*, MILD MANNERED SCENE POSER.


SARA?
HEY, MATT.
YOU GOING TO GET SOMETHING TO EAT? THERE'S PLENTY OF FOOD LEFT.
I'M NOT HUNGRY.
WELL, YOU COULD *STILL* JOIN THE PARTY. YOU DON'T *HAVE* TO BE SUCH A LONER ALL THE TIME.
SORRY, I'VE JUST HAD A LOT ON MY MIND. AND I'VE NEVER REALLY BEEN ONE FOR PARTIES.
YEAH, I'VE *NOTICED* THAT ABOUT YOU.
WHAT? THAT I'M *SOCIALLY* AWKWARD?

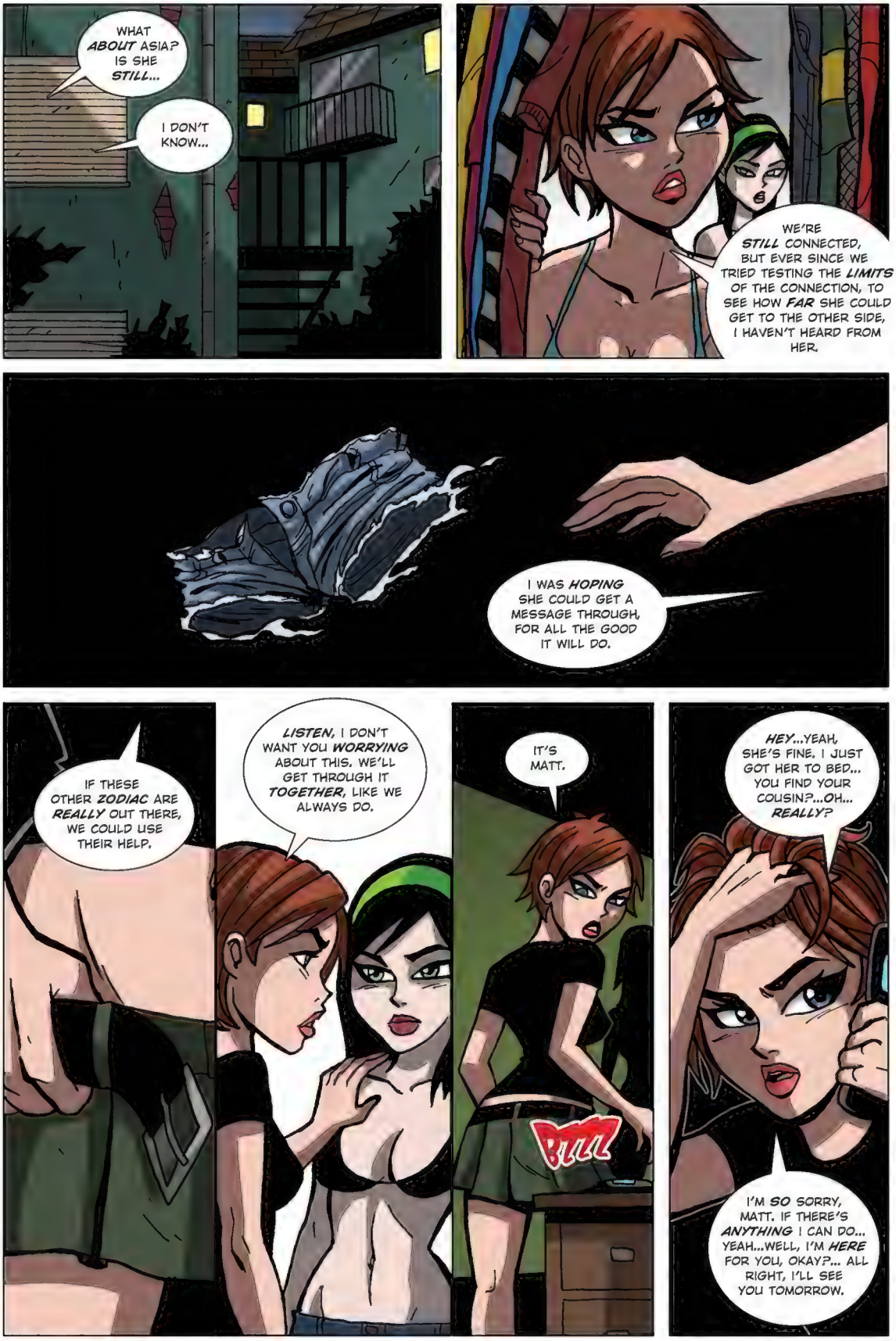
NO, WHAT I MEANT WAS THAT THERE'S ALWAYS A LOT MORE GOING ON BEHIND YOUR EYES THAN YOU LET ON. IT'S KIND OF A TURN ON, ACTUALLY.
GIVE ME A BREAK.
I'M SERIOUS! YOU'VE GOT THE WHOLE DARK AND MYSTERIOUS THING GOING ON. IT'S HOT.
I THINK YOU'VE HAD TOO MUCH TO DRINK!
NOPE. TOTALLY SOBER!
YEAH, AND I DIED AND RETURNED FROM THE GRAVE.
GUESS THAT MAKES YOU MY PERSONAL SAVIOR.
OUCH! WHAT WAS THAT FOR?
FOR BEING A DRUNKEN IDIOT.
COME ON, SARA...
TAKE THAT HAND OFF OF ME BEFORE I BREAK IT.

SARA! WHY DO YOU ALWAYS DO THIS? I'M TIRED OF GOING AROUND IN CIRCLES WITH YOU. I LIKE YOU. YOU LIKE ME. WHY KEEP PLAYING THIS GAME?
WHO SAID I LIKED YOU?
YOU CAN'T TELL ME -
BILL
ONE OF YOUR CONQUESTS REQUESTING A MIDNIGHT RENDEZVOUS?
1 New Message
NO, IT'S MY UNCLE. I INVITED MY COUSIN BRYAN TO THE PARTY BUT HE NEVER SHOWED UP.
WON'T ANSWER HIS PHONE EITHER. HIS DAD SAYS HE LEFT THE HOUSE OVER THREE HOURS AGO.
OH. THAT SUCKS.
YEAH. HE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE COMING IN FROM HIGHWAY 12. WEREN'T YOU AND HAZY OUT HIKING THAT WAY EARLIER? DID YOU HAPPEN TO SEE ANYTHING?
NO. NOT A THING.
I'M GOING TO DRIVE UP THAT WAY JUST IN CASE. YOU WANT TO COME ALONG?
YOU KNOW, I'D LOVE TO, MATT, BUT I DON'T THINK HAZY'S DOING TOO WELL.

BLECH!
I SHOULD GET HER HOME.
ALL RIGHT. I'LL CALL YOU LATER.
YEAH, OKAY. I HOPE YOU FIND YOUR COUSIN.
I *PROMISE* YOU, NARA. I *WASN'T* DRINKING.
WELL, *WHATEVER* IT WAS, IT WAS *PERFECT* TIMING.

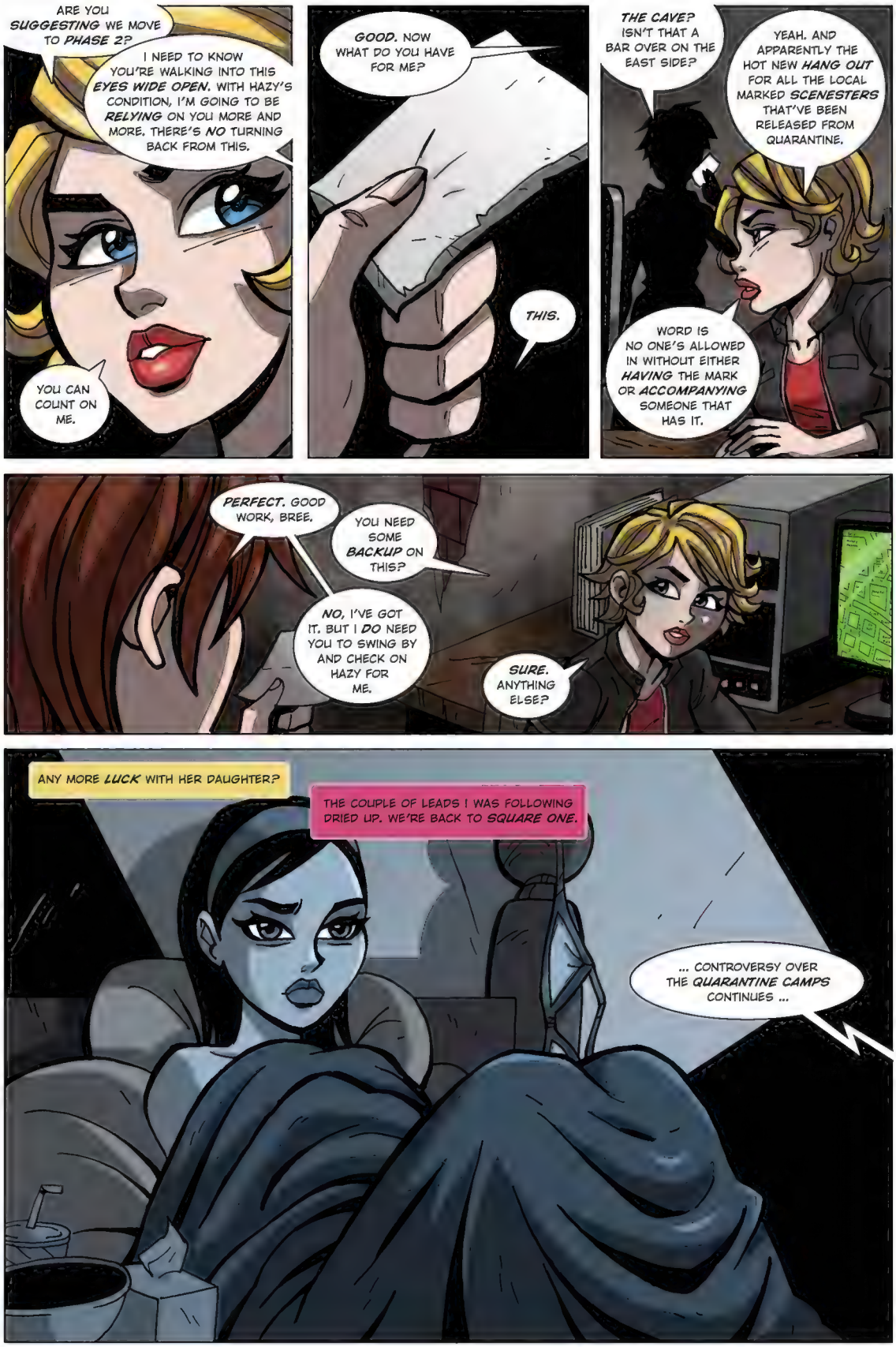
I'M *TELLING* YOU, NARA. I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING *SERIOUSLY WRONG* WITH ME.
WHEN DID YOU START FEELING BAD?
EARLIER TODAY. I STARTED HAVING HEADACHES. THEN IT JUST *PROGRESSED* UNTIL I WAS HEAVING MY *GUTS* OUT ALL OVER THE BEACH.
OH, GOD...
WHAT IS IT?
THE *SIGIL*. THE ONE THAT *APPEARED* RIGHT AFTER THE *KEY* JOINED ITSELF TO YOU. IT'S... *REAPPEARING*.

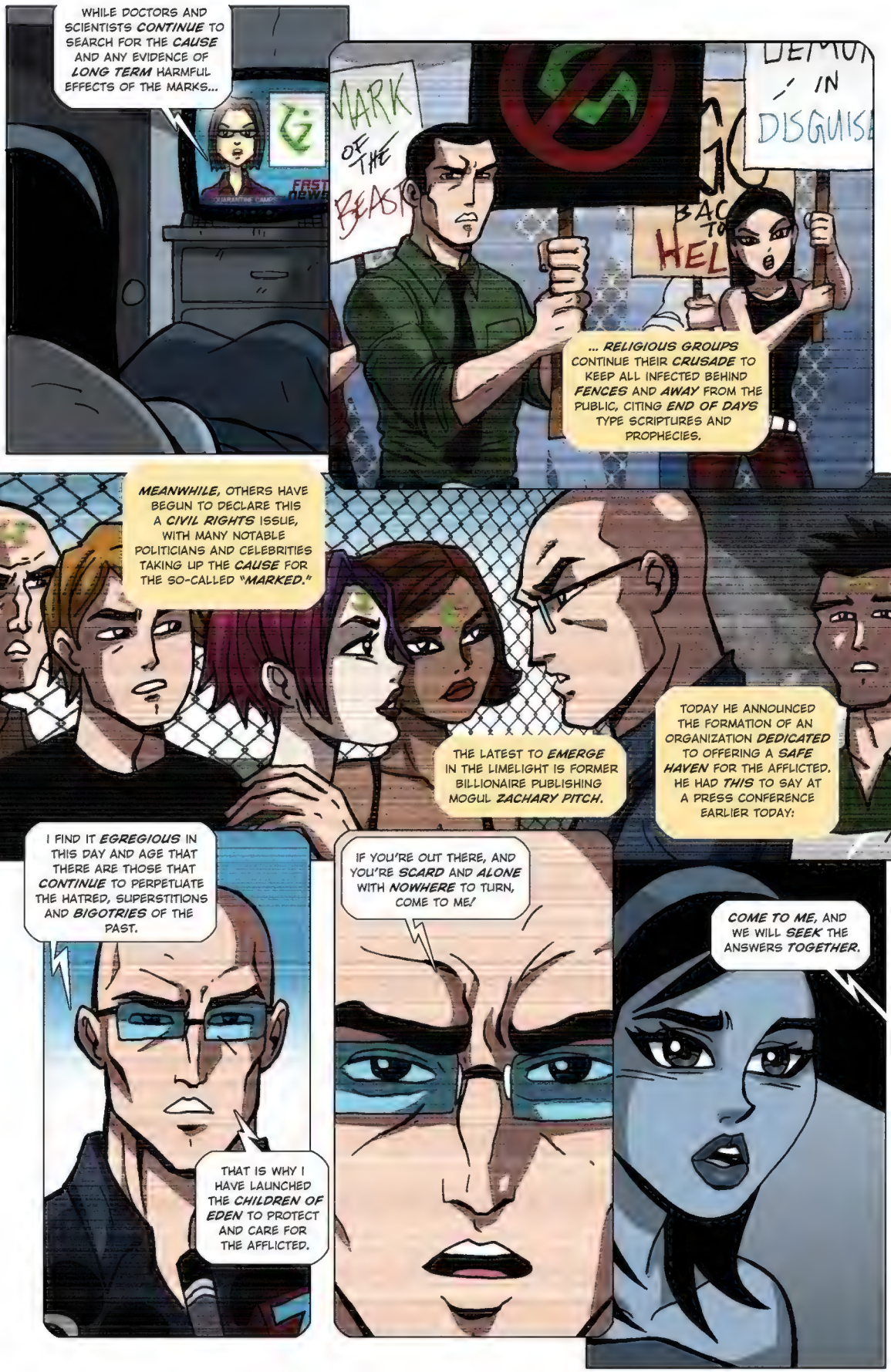
WHAT? WHY? AFTER ALL THIS TIME?
YOU KNOW, IT FIGURES. JUST WHEN IT SEEMED LIKE THINGS MIGHT BE GETTING NORMAL AGAIN.
FIRST THESE MARKED DEMON-MEN START POPPING UP, NOW THIS!
OH MY GOD, NARA. DO YOU THINK THERE COULD BE A CONNECTION?
NO! DON'T SAY THAT.
DON'T LIE TO ME, NARA! WE ALREADY KNOW THAT THIS THING I CARRY IS THE KEY TO THE GATES OF HELL.
AND EVERY TIME WE'VE EVER GONE UP AGAINST THE UNHOLY THESE DAMN GREEN MARKS ARE INVOLVED.
WHAT IF... WHAT IF I'M ONE OF THEM?
SHUT UP AND LISTEN TO ME! WHATEVER THIS MEANS, YOU'RE NOT ONE OF THEM, OKAY! I MADE A PROMISE THAT I WOULDN'T LET ANYTHING HAPPEN TO YOU.
POWERS OR NOT, I'M STILL GEMINI. MY AND ASIA'S SOLE MISSION NOW IS SAFEGUARDING THE KEY, AND THAT MEANS PROTECTING YOU.
WE'RE NOT GIVING UP, GOT IT?


WHAT ABOUT ASIA? IS SHE STILL...
I DON'T KNOW...
WE'RE STILL CONNECTED, BUT EVER SINCE WE TRIED TESTING THE LIMITS OF THE CONNECTION, TO SEE HOW FAR SHE COULD GET TO THE OTHER SIDE, I HAVEN'T HEARD FROM HER.
I WAS HOPING SHE COULD GET A MESSAGE THROUGH, FOR ALL THE GOOD IT WILL DO.
IF THESE OTHER ZODIAC ARE REALLY OUT THERE, WE COULD USE THEIR HELP.
LISTEN, I DON'T WANT YOU WORRYING ABOUT THIS. WE'LL GET THROUGH IT TOGETHER, LIKE WE ALWAYS DO.
IT'S MATT.
BZZZ
HEY...YEAH, SHE'S FINE. I JUST GOT HER TO BED... YOU FIND YOUR COUSIN?...OH... REALLY?
I'M SO SORRY, MATT. IF THERE'S ANYTHING I CAN DO... YEAH...WELL, I'M HERE FOR YOU, OKAY?... ALL RIGHT, I'LL SEE YOU TOMORROW.

WHAT'S UP?
REMEMBER THE BASTARD WE LEFT SPLIT OPEN IN THE WOODS? WELL, TURNS OUT GOAT-MAN'S FORMER SELF WAS MATT'S COUSIN.
IF HE DOESN'T TURN UP BY MORNING, THEY'RE REPORTING HIM MISSING. I'VE GOT A MESS TO CLEAN UP BEFORE THAT PLACE IS CRAWLING WITH SEARCH TEAMS.
I'LL COME WITH YOU.
NO. YOU STAY HERE AND GET SOME REST. CALL ME IF THERE'RE ANY CHANGES, OKAY?
NARA... PLEASE BE CAREFUL.
KILDAY! YOU'RE LATE.
IS YOUR DAD AWAKE?
NO...
GOOD.

NO SANTA CLAUS JOKES.
YOU LOOK LIKE HELL. MAY I ASK WHAT'S IN THE BAG?
PROOF.
OKAY, GROSS. AND WE NEED THIS BECAUSE...?
IF SOMETHING HAPPENS... IF WE'RE CAUGHT, WE'RE GOING TO NEED SOMETHING TO BACK UP OUR CLAIMS THAT REGULAR PEOPLE ARE TAKING SIDES AGAINST HUMANITY AND JOINING HELL'S ARMY.
BUT IF YOU'RE RIGHT, AND THEY ALREADY HAVE AGENTS IN LAW ENFORCEMENT, GOVERNMENT, AND THE COURTS, THEN IT WON'T MATTER WHAT PROOF WE HAVE.
I'M WILLING TO TAKE MY CHANCES. THE PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW WHAT'S REALLY GOING ON OR ONE DAY WE'RE GOING TO WAKE UP SURROUNDED.
WE MAY NOT BE ABLE TO STOP EARTH FROM GOING TO HELL, BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN WE HAVE TO JUST ROLL OVER AND ACCEPT IT.

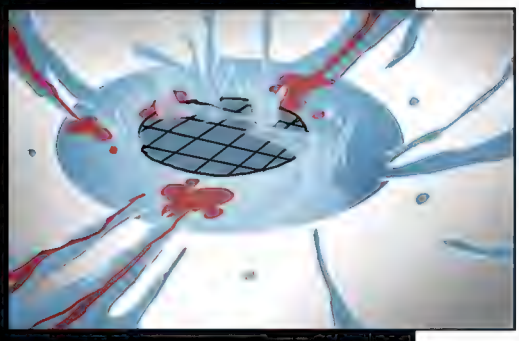

ARE YOU SUGGESTING WE MOVE TO PHASE 2?
I NEED TO KNOW YOU'RE WALKING INTO THIS EYES WIDE OPEN. WITH HAZY'S CONDITION, I'M GOING TO BE RELYING ON YOU MORE AND MORE. THERE'S NO TURNING BACK FROM THIS.
YOU CAN COUNT ON ME.
GOOD. NOW WHAT DO YOU HAVE FOR ME?
THIS.
THE CAVE? ISN'T THAT A BAR OVER ON THE EAST SIDE?
YEAH. AND APPARENTLY THE HOT NEW HANG OUT FOR ALL THE LOCAL MARKED SCENESTERS THAT'VE BEEN RELEASED FROM QUARANTINE.
WORD IS NO ONE'S ALLOWED IN WITHOUT EITHER HAVING THE MARK OR ACCOMPANYING SOMEONE THAT HAS IT.
PERFECT. GOOD WORK, BREE.
YOU NEED SOME BACKUP ON THIS?
NO, I'VE GOT IT. BUT I DO NEED YOU TO SWING BY AND CHECK ON HAZY FOR ME.
SURE. ANYTHING ELSE?
ANY MORE LUCK WITH HER DAUGHTER?
THE COUPLE OF LEADS I WAS FOLLOWING DRIED UP. WE'RE BACK TO SQUARE ONE.
... CONTROVERSY OVER THE QUARANTINE CAMPS CONTINUES ...


WHILE DOCTORS AND SCIENTISTS *CONTINUE* TO SEARCH FOR THE *CAUSE* AND ANY EVIDENCE OF *LONG TERM* HARMFUL EFFECTS OF THE MARKS...
MARK OF THE BEAST
... *RELIGIOUS GROUPS* CONTINUE THEIR *CRUSADE* TO KEEP ALL INFECTED BEHIND *FENCES* AND *AWAY* FROM THE PUBLIC, CITING *END OF DAYS* TYPE SCRIPTURES AND PROPHECIES.
MEANWHILE, OTHERS HAVE BEGUN TO DECLARE THIS A *CIVIL RIGHTS* ISSUE, WITH MANY NOTABLE POLITICIANS AND CELEBRITIES TAKING UP THE *CAUSE* FOR THE SO-CALLED *"MARKED."*
THE LATEST TO *EMERGE* IN THE LIMELIGHT IS FORMER BILLIONAIRE PUBLISHING MOGUL *ZACHARY PITCH*.
TODAY HE ANNOUNCED THE FORMATION OF AN ORGANIZATION *DEDICATED* TO OFFERING A *SAFE HAVEN* FOR THE AFFLICTED. HE HAD *THIS* TO SAY AT A PRESS CONFERENCE EARLIER TODAY:
I FIND IT *EGREGIOUS* IN THIS DAY AND AGE THAT THERE ARE THOSE THAT *CONTINUE* TO PERPETUATE THE HATRED, SUPERSTITIONS AND *BIGOTRIES* OF THE PAST.
THAT IS WHY I HAVE LAUNCHED THE *CHILDREN OF EDEN* TO PROTECT AND CARE FOR THE AFFLICTED.
IF YOU'RE OUT THERE, AND YOU'RE *SCARD* AND *ALONE* WITH *NOWHERE* TO TURN, COME TO ME!
COME TO ME, AND WE WILL *SEEK* THE ANSWERS *TOGETHER*.

the GATE

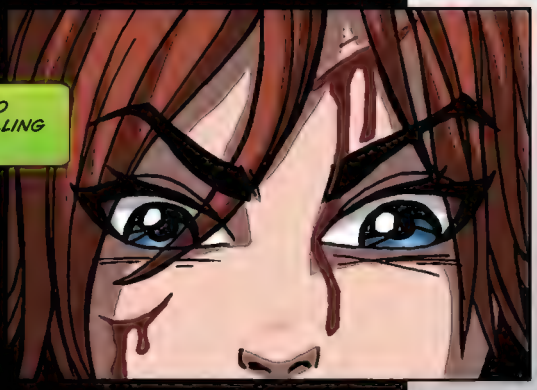
THE BORDERLANDS
THE ENEMY KNOWS WE'RE HERE! WE MUST LEAVE NOW!
WHAT ABOUT THE MESSENGER?
THEY FOLLOWED HER HERE.
THERE! SOMEONE APPROACHES!

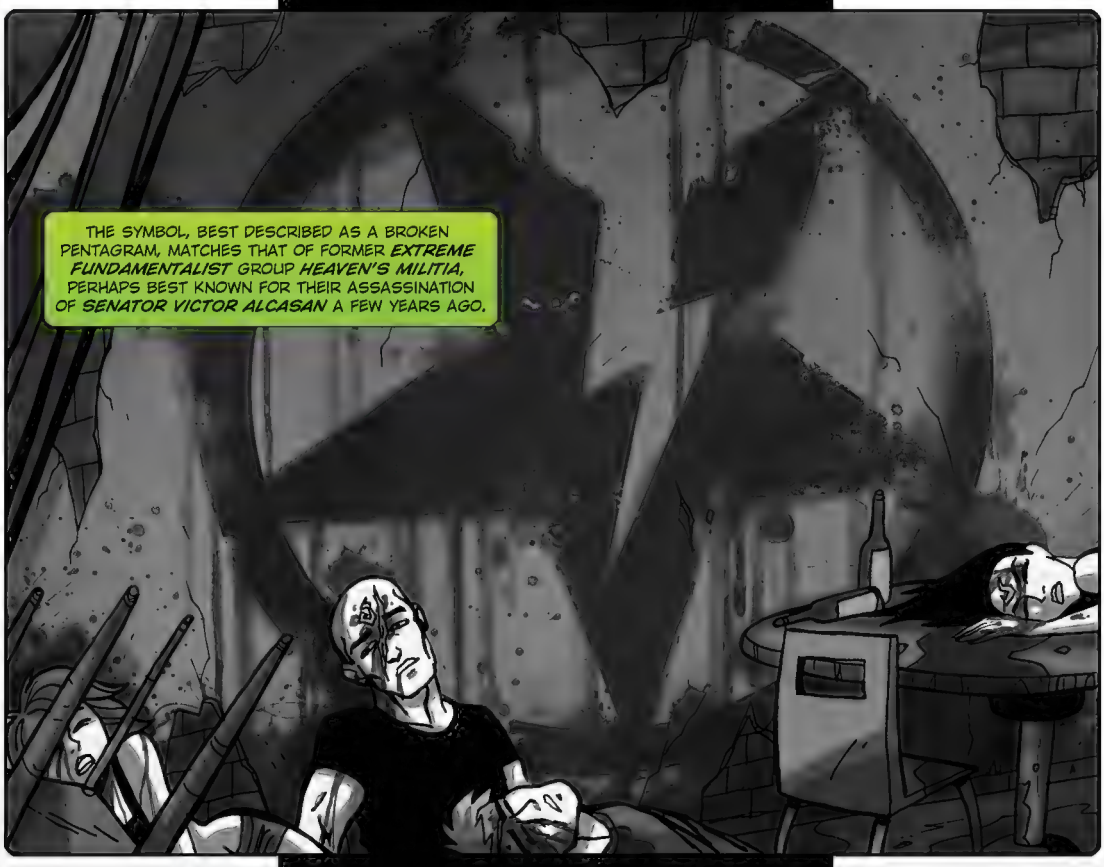
CHAPTER 2



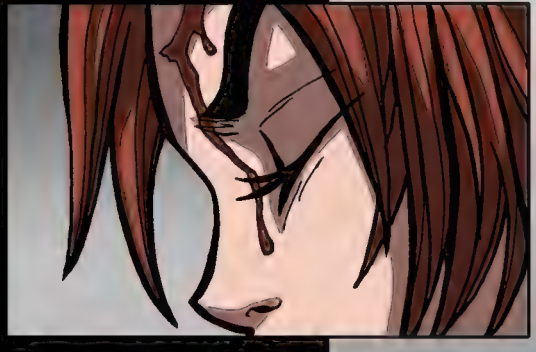
IN WHAT MAY BE THE MOST ***TRAGIC*** AND ***HORRIFIC*** DISPLAY OF VIOLENCE AGAINST THE MARKED SO FAR, ***THIRTY-ONE*** PEOPLE WERE BRUTALLY ***MURDERED*** AT A POPULAR DOWNTOWN NIGHTCLUB LATE LAST NIGHT.

WHILE THE KILLER OR KILLERS LEFT ***NO*** SURVIVORS, THEY DID LEAVE BEHIND A ***CALLING CARD*** OF SORTS...

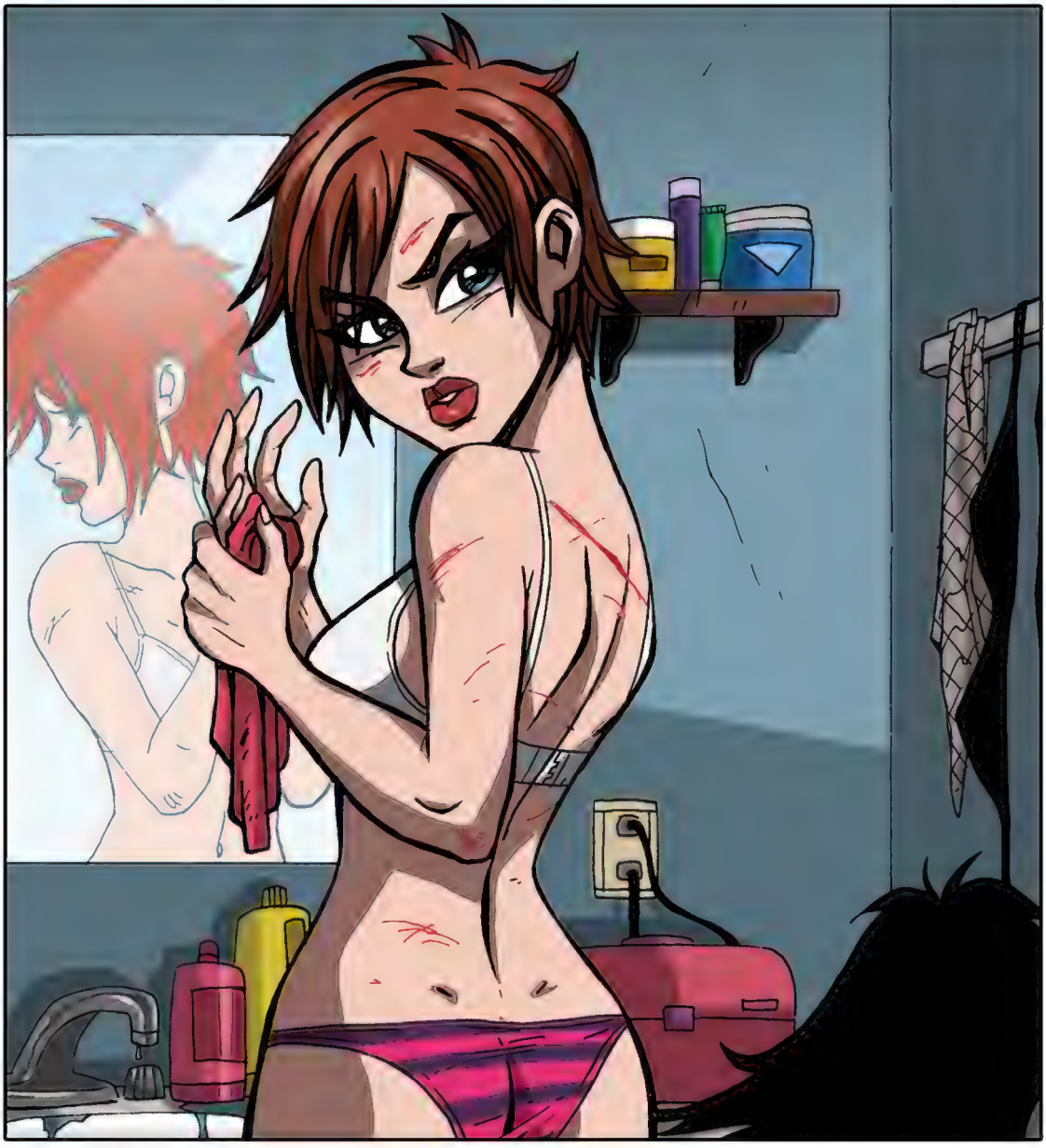



THE SYMBOL, BEST DESCRIBED AS A BROKEN PENTAGRAM, MATCHES THAT OF FORMER *EXTREME FUNDAMENTALIST* GROUP *HEAVEN'S MILITIA*, PERHAPS BEST KNOWN FOR THEIR ASSASSINATION OF *SENATOR VICTOR ALCASAN* A FEW YEARS AGO.

WHETHER THE KILLER IS *AFFILIATED* WITH THE SAME GROUP OR ACTING ALONE, POLICE ARE UNSURE OF AT THIS TIME. BUT THEY ARE URGING *ANYONE* WITH INFORMATION IN THE SLAYINGS TO COME FORWARD *IMMEDIATELY.*



NARA! WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? I'VE BEEN WORRIED -



ARE YOU OKAY? ARE YOU HURT?
NOTHING YOU NEED TO WORRY ABOUT.
OH, MY GOD. NARA, PLEASE DON'T TELL ME THAT WAS YOU. THOSE PEOPLE ... DID YOU REALLY DO IT?
THEY WEREN'T PEOPLE. NOT ANYMORE.
DO YOU KNOW THAT FOR SURE?
COME ON, HAZY. WE BOTH KNOW IT.
THEN WHY SHUT ME OUT? WHY KEEP ME IN THE DARK? HAVEN'T WE ALWAYS BEEN IN THIS TOGETHER?
EVERYTHING I'VE DONE HAS BEEN TO KEEP YOU SAFE.
BAND AID
OH, REALLY? THEN WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THE POLICE COME LOOKING FOR YOU AND I GET ARRESTED AS AN ACCOMPLICE TO MURDER?
HOW IS THAT KEEPING ME SAFE?

THAT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN. I'VE BEEN CAREFUL.
CAREFUL? THERE'S NOTHING CAREFUL ABOUT KILLING THIRTY PEOPLE AND THEN LEAVING YOUR SIGNATURE IN THE VICTIMS' BLOOD!
ARE YOU OUT OF YOUR MIND?
I'VE GOTTA GO.
WHY? YOU AND YOUR GIRLFRIEND NEED TO GO PLAN YOUR NEXT MASS MURDER?
THE ONLY REASON YOU'RE EVEN ALIVE TODAY IS BECAUSE OF ME!
GET THE HELL OUT!
SLAM!

LINGTON HILLS POST
31 DEAD IN BRUTAL SLAYING
KILLER STILL AT LARGE
GOOD MORNING, SON.
GO TO HELL.
CRANKY TODAY. WHAT'S EATING YOU?
YOU.

HAHAHA! I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN. BEING WITHOUT A BODY MYSELF FOR A VERY LONG TIME, I KNOW HOW MADDENING IT CAN BE.
GET. OUT. OF. MY. HEAD!
NO. I'M NOT DONE YET.
HELLO, HENRICK.
I KNOW. I'M SORRY. I'VE JUST BEEN BUSY.
SO I'VE HEARD.
NARA. I WAS WONDERING WHEN YOU WOULD WALK THROUGH MY DOORS AGAIN.

LOOK. I'M -
I KNOW MY DAUGHTER HAS BEEN WORKING WITH YOU.
HENRICK, SHE CAME TO ME. SHE WANTED -
I DON'T REALLY CARE WHO DID WHAT. I JUST WANT IT TO STOP. NOW. IF WHAT YOU'RE DOING BLOWS BACK ON HER...
I WOULD NEVER LET ANYTHING HAPPEN TO BREE. I KNOW WE'VE HAD OUR DIFFERENCES, BUT I DON'T UNDER-STAND...
...YOU, OF ALL PEOPLE. YOU WERE RIGHT THERE WITH ME! YOU'VE SEEN WHAT I'VE SEEN! HECK, YOU'RE PART OF THE REASON I'M EVEN HERE IN THE FIRST PLACE.
YES. AND IF DEMONS START RUNNING THROUGH THE STREETS AGAIN, YOU CAN BET I'LL BE THE FIRST ONE OUT THERE, SHOT GUN IN HAND.
UNTIL THEN, I'LL BE IN HERE, FIGHTING THE BEST WAY I KNOW HOW - ON MY KNEES BEFORE GOD.
YOU THINK I'M MAKING A MISTAKE.
I DON'T KNOW, NARA. ALL I KNOW IS THAT IT'S DANGEROUS. YOU'VE BEEN LIKE A DAUGHTER TO ME. THE LAST THING I WANT IS FOR YOU TO GET HURT.
BESIDES, HOW DO WE KNOW FOR CERTAIN THAT THESE MARKED ARE DAMNED AND BEYOND ALL HOPE OF REDEMPTION?

I CAN'T STAND BY AND DO *NOTHING*. NOT WITH ALL THAT I KNOW AND ALL THAT I'VE SEEN. AND NOW THAT WE'RE CUT OFF FROM THE OTHER SIDE, WHO *KNOWS* IF HELP WILL EVER COME.
THE *ONE* THING I KNOW FOR SURE IS THAT THESE PEOPLE BEAR THE MARK OF OUR *ENEMY*. I'LL LEAVE MATTERS OF THE *SOUL* TO GOD. BUT I'M GUESSING YOU DON'T RECEIVE SATAN'S *STAMP* OF APPROVAL UNLESS YOU'VE DONE SOMETHING TO *EARN* IT.
WHETHER THEY KNOW IT OR NOT, THEY'VE ALREADY *MADE* THEIR CHOICE.
IF THINGS WERE *DIFFERENT*... IF I DIDN'T HAVE A *RESPONSIBILITY* TO THIS CHURCH OR MY DAUGHTER, I WOULD PROBABLY BE RIGHT OUT THERE *WITH* YOU. YOU'RE IN MY *PRAYERS*.
JUST *PROMISE* ME YOU'LL WATCH YOURSELF.

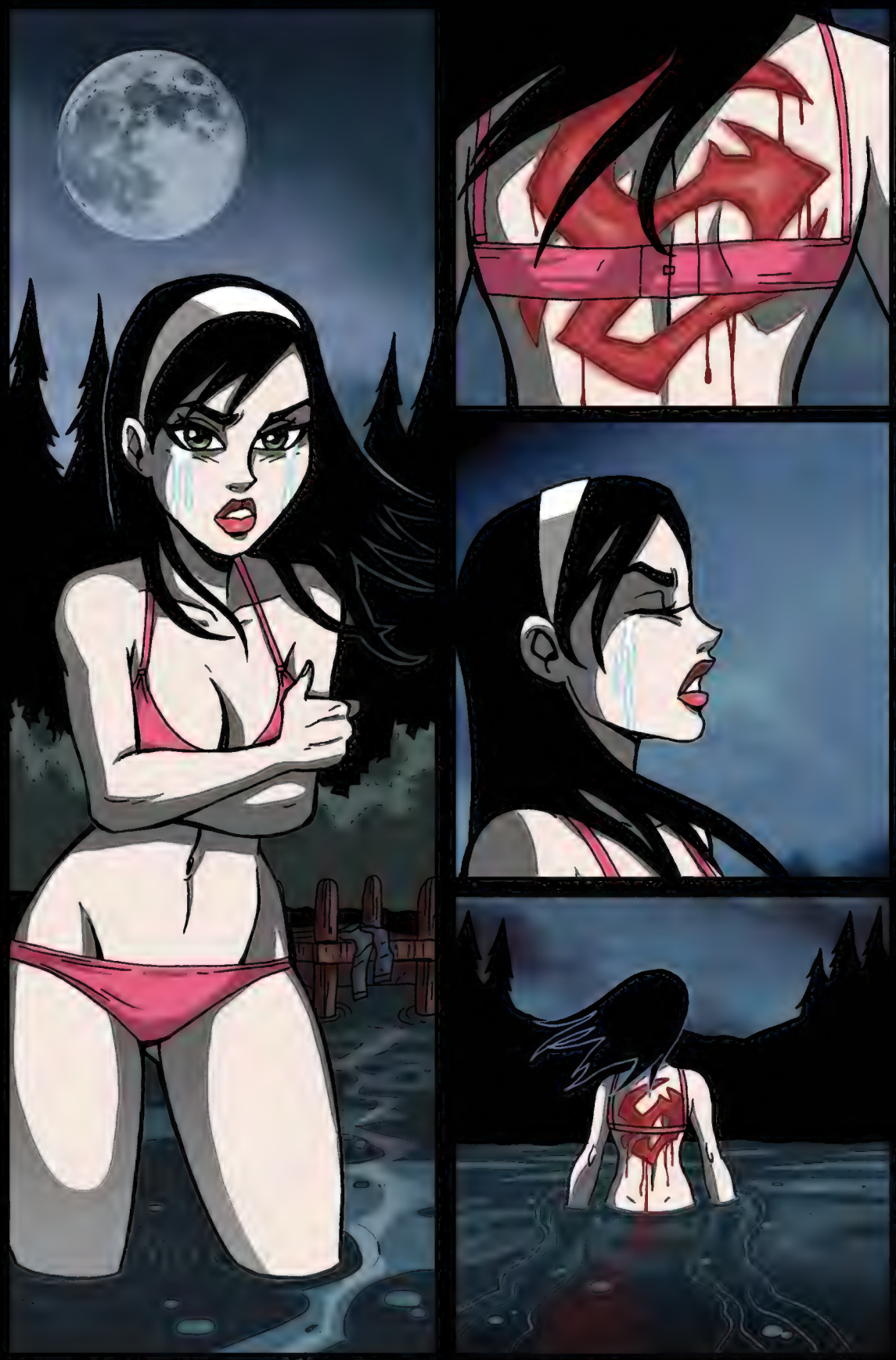
HAZY... COME TO ME!

THE CHILDREN OF EDEN COMPOUND.
THIS HAS BEEN A DARK DAY FOR US, FRIENDS. WE MOURN THE LOSS OF OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS, VICTIMS OF A SENSELESS AND HATEFUL IDEOLOGY.

THE BIRTH OF THIS ORGANIZATION, THIS HOME, COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MORE TIMELY. OUR MISSION HAS BECOME MORE URGENT THAN EVER.
I KNOW YOU'RE ALL AFRAID. BUT WE MUSTN'T LET THAT FEAR TURN INTO THE SAME HATE AND ANGER THAT DRIVES OUR OPPRESSORS. WE MUST CHANNEL OUR FEARS, OUR QUESTIONS, OUR DOUBTS, INTO SOMETHING POSITIVE.
YOU HAVE BEEN CALLED THE CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL. DEMONS IN DISGUISE. ABOMINATIONS IN THE EYES OF GOD. IT'S BEEN SAID THAT YOU BEAR THE MARK OF THE BEAST, THAT YOU ARE HARBINGERS OF THE DAY THAT WILL SEE THE OPENING OF THE GREAT ABYSS, UNLEASHING TERRIBLE EVIL UPON THE EARTH.
BUT I'M HERE TO TELL YOU THAT THERE IS NO DEVIL, NO BEAST, NO SATAN, NO UNHOLY PLACE OF JUDGMENT. THERE IS ONLY FEAR. FEAR IS OUR ADVERSARY.
FEAR IS THE DWELLER IN THE ABYSS.

AND WE MUST CONFRONT IT!
BREE!
KILDAY! HOW'S THE NEW LEAD PANNING OUT?
FINE, BUT THAT'S NOT WHY I'M CALLING. YOU STILL WATCHING HAZY?
YEAH, I WAS ABOUT TO CALL YOU. SHE LEFT THE APARTMENT ABOUT 10 MINUTES AGO AND JUST GOT ON HIGHWAY 12. LOOKS LIKE SHE'S HEADED TO THE LAKE. YOU WANT ME TO STAY ON HER?
NO. I'LL TAKE CARE OF IT.
WHY? WHAT'S GOING ON?
I'VE BEEN SO STUPID, BREE. I'VE BEEN SO LOST IN THE DETAILS THAT I MISSED THE BIGGER PICTURE. IT'S NOT ABOUT THE MARKED. THEY'RE ONLY A SIDESHOW. IT'S ABRAHAM PITCH. HE'S THE HEAD OF THE SNAKE.
ABRAHAM PITCH?

I DON'T KNOW HOW, BUT HE'S IN POSSESSION OF HIS SON'S BODY. I'VE HAD MY SUSPICIONS FOR A WHILE, BUT NOW I'M SURE OF IT. HE'S THE ONE RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS WHOLE DAMN MESS.
HOTU-81
HE'S THE ONE THAT HAD ME KILLED. HE AIDED AND ABETTED THE INVASION OF BOLABOGG AND HIS ARMY. THIS ALL GOES BACK TO HIM.
WHAT'S HE WANT NOW?
I THINK HE'S FOUND ANOTHER GATEWAY TO THE ABYSS. AND HE INTENDS TO OPEN IT.
WANT ME HEAD OVER TO THAT COMPOUND OF HIS, KEEP AN EYE ON HIM?
NO. I WANT YOU TO GO HOME AND GET RID OF ANY AND EVERYTHING THAT CONNECTS YOU TO ME. COMPUTERS, NOTES. DESTROY IT ALL.
NARA, I -
JUST DO IT, BREE! PITCH BEEN ONE STEP AHEAD OF US THIS WHOLE TIME. JUST GET RID OF EVERYTHING AND LAY LOW.
HIDDEN LAKE
6 MILES

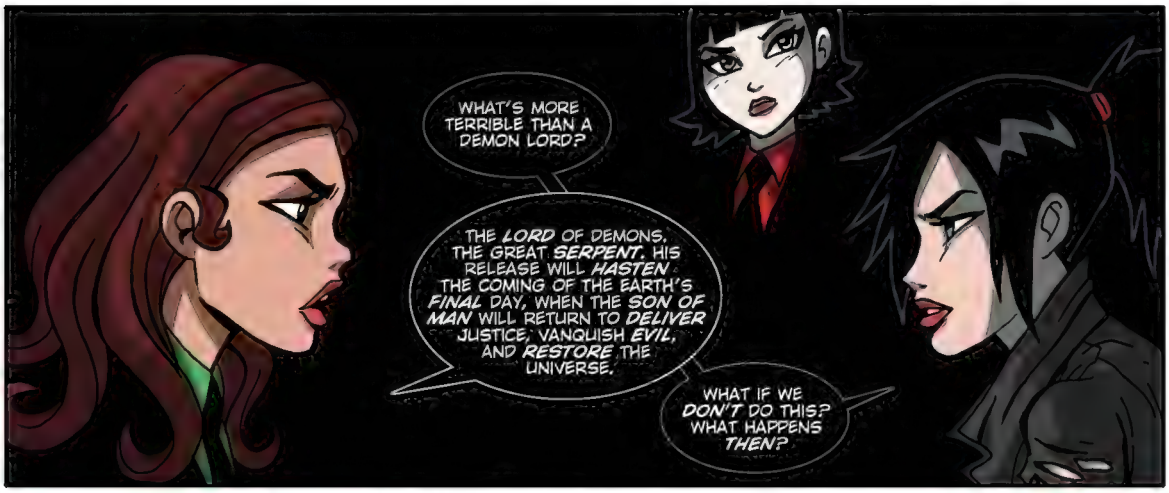


HAZY!

HAZY! GET OUT OF THE WATER!
GET AWAY FROM ME!
HAZY, I'M SORRY FOR EVERYTHING! BUT YOU HAVE TO LISTEN TO ME! THE LAKE IS WHAT'S AFFECTING YOU. SOMEWHERE IN THE LAKE IS ANOTHER GATEWAY. PITCH KNOWS AND HE'S COMING FOR US! LET'S JUST GO AND LEAVE THIS TOWN. WE'LL LEAVE EVERYTHING BEHIND AND NEVER LOOK BACK.
I CAN'T, NARA... I CAN'T...
STAY STILL! I'M COMING TO GET YOU!
NARA..!

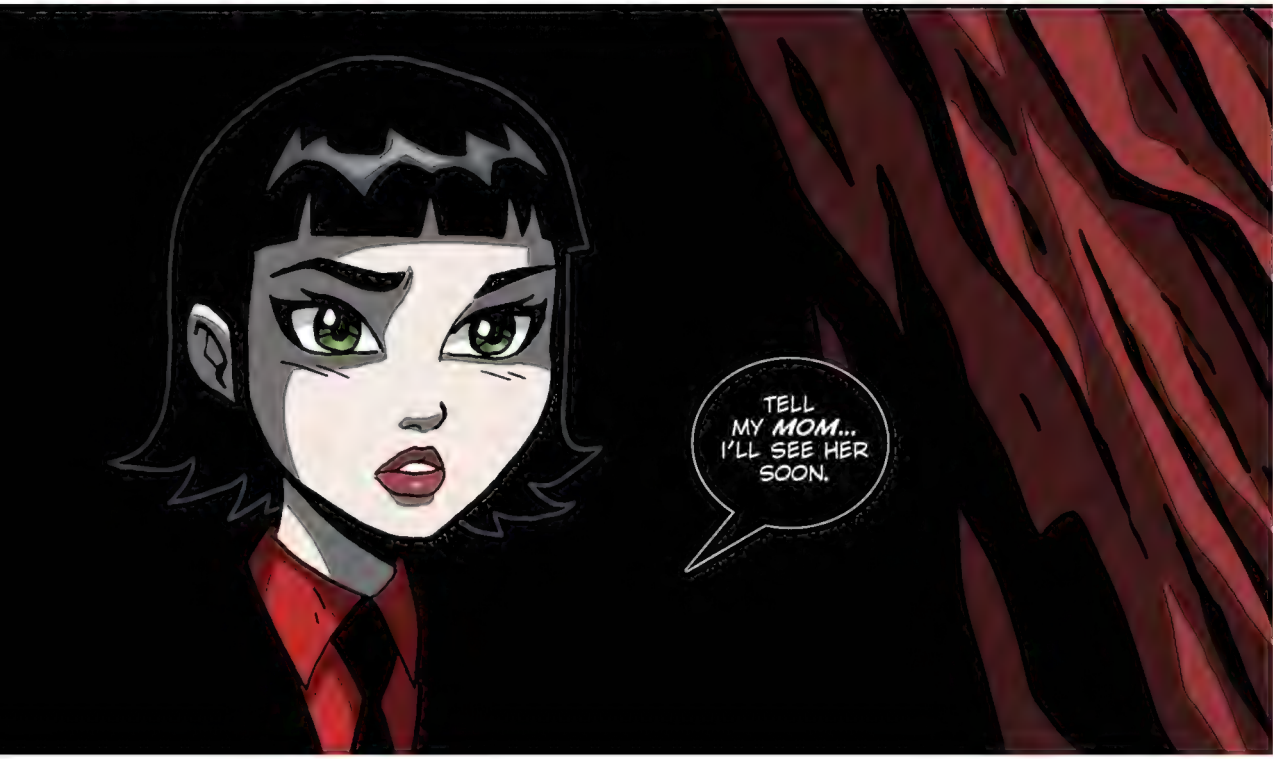
IT'S OKAY. I'VE GOT YOU!

THE BORDERLANDS
LISTEN CAREFULLY, ASIA. NARA IS ON HER OWN. EVEN IF WE COULD GET THROUGH TO EARTH, WE'RE NOT ALLOWED. EACH OF US IS GIVEN AN APPOINTED TIME TO DO OUR WORK.
WE ARE THE 8 THAT WERE. GEMINI IS THE ONE THAT IS. ONE IS LOST TO US, TWO ARE BEYOND OUR REACH, AND ANOTHER IS STILL TO COME.
THERE'S ANOTHER ZODIAC ON EARTH, WAITING TO BE ACTIVATED?
YES, BUT THAT'S NOT IMPORTANT NOW. TIME IS WINDING DOWN. GEMINI MUST FULFILL HER TASK.
YOU MEAN ... USE THE KEY TO OPEN THE ABYSS?
YES. AS GEMINI, THE TASK IS APPOINTED TO YOU AND NARA ALONE.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHY SHOULD WE RELEASE THIS EVIL INTO THE WORLD, THIS 13TH BROTHER?
13TH BROTHER? THE 13TH BROTHER IS NOTHING BUT A COSMIC JOKE, A MYTH CONCOCTED TO CONTROL THE OTHER 12 DEMON LORDS. WHAT LIES IN THE ABYSS IS SOMETHING MUCH MORE TERRIBLE. SOMETHING THAT MAKES EVEN DEMONS SHUDDER.


WHAT'S MORE TERRIBLE THAN A DEMON LORD?
THE *LORD* OF DEMONS. THE GREAT *SERPENT*. HIS RELEASE WILL *HASTEN* THE COMING OF THE EARTH'S *FINAL* DAY, WHEN THE *SON OF MAN* WILL RETURN TO *DELIVER* JUSTICE, VANQUISH *EVIL*, AND *RESTORE* THE UNIVERSE.
WHAT IF WE *DON'T* DO THIS? WHAT HAPPENS *THEN*?

DEATH AND *HADES* WILL CONTINUE TO *REIGN* ON EARTH AND HUMANITY WILL BE *CONSUMED* BY THE ENEMY. *ALL* OF CREATION DEPENDS ON *YOU*.
NO *PRESSURE*, RIGHT?
NOW *GO*. WE WON'T BE ABLE TO HOLD THEM OFF MUCH LONGER.

WAIT! ONE MORE THING!
TELL *HAZY*...


TELL MY *MOM*... I'LL SEE HER SOON.

CHAPTER 3
THIS WAS THE SCENE JUST MINUTES AGO AS POLICE TOOK INTO CUSTODY 72 YEAR OLD HENRICK STRAUSS, PASTOR OF LIGHTHOUSE COMMUNITY CHURCH.

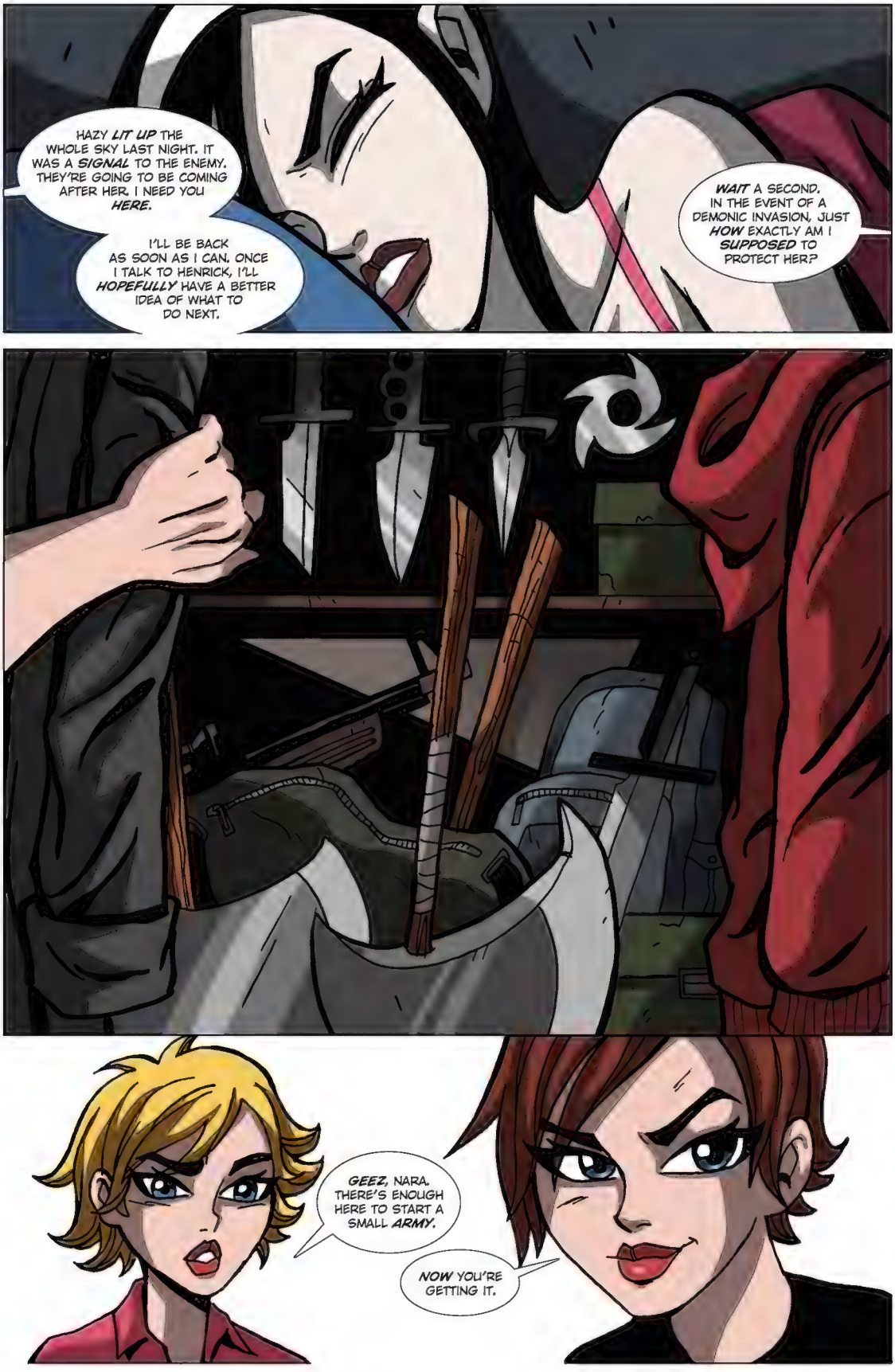
STRAUSS HAS BEEN ARRESTED FOR HIS ALLEGED INVOLVEMENT IN THE SLAYING OF 31 PEOPLE AT THE CAVE NIGHTCLUB YESTERDAY AND FOR THE MURDER OF 24 YEAR OLD BRYAN BAUGH, WHOSE REMAINS WERE UNCOVERED IN STRAUSS'S BASEMENT...

... ALONG WITH MATERIAL LINKING HIM TO OTHERS WHO ARE APPARENTLY TRYING TO RESURRECT THE FUNDAMENTALIST CULT FORMERLY KNOWN AS HEAVEN'S MILITIA.

IT IS BELIEVED THAT STRAUSS MAY ALSO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR NUMEROUS OTHER MURDERS AND DISAPPEARANCES OF THE MARKED OVER THE PAST SEVERAL WEEKS. HIS DAUGHTER IS BEING SOUGHT FOR QUESTIONING.

I WAS TOO LATE. THIS IS ALL MY FAULT.
NO. IT'S MY FAULT. I WAS STUPID. CARELESS. HE TRIED TO WARN ME...
WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO TO? WE SHOULD BE THE ONES GOING TO JAIL. MAYBE WE SHOULD JUST TURN OURSELVES IN, TELL THEM THE TRUTH.
NO! THAT'S WHAT THEY WANT! THEY'RE TRYING TO DRAW US OUT. THEY KNOW HENRICK'S INNOCENT. WE'RE BEING PLAYED!

SO WE JUST LET MY DAD GO TO PRISON?
NO. I'LL FIGURE SOMETHING OUT. I JUST NEED TIME TO THINK.
WHAT ABOUT HAZY?
WHAT HAPPENED TO HER?
I DON'T KNOW. BUT MY GUESS IS THAT THE BACKDOOR TO THE ABYSS IS AT THE BOTTOM OF HIDDEN LAKE. WHATEVER'S TRAPPED IN THERE DREW HAZY OUT. IT'S DESPERATE TO GET FREE.
BACK WHEN I AGREED TO HELP YOU, THIS ALL SEEMED SO SIMPLE. FIGHT FOR TRUTH. KILL THE BAD GUYS. BUT NOW...
I WAS PLANNING ON LEAVING TOWN. BUT I WON'T ABANDON YOUR DAD. I NEED TO TRY AND SEE HIM. BUT I WANT YOU TO STAY PUT.
NO. HE'S MY FATHER.
EXACTLY. THEY'RE LOOKING FOR YOU, BREE. YOU'LL BE ARRESTED AS AN ACCOMPLICE. YOU CAN'T HELP HIM THAT WAY.
YOU WANT ME TO JUST STAY HERE AND DO NOTHING?


HAZY LIT UP THE WHOLE SKY LAST NIGHT. IT WAS A SIGNAL TO THE ENEMY. THEY'RE GOING TO BE COMING AFTER HER. I NEED YOU HERE.
I'LL BE BACK AS SOON AS I CAN. ONCE I TALK TO HENRICK, I'LL HOPEFULLY HAVE A BETTER IDEA OF WHAT TO DO NEXT.
WAIT A SECOND. IN THE EVENT OF A DEMONIC INVASION, JUST HOW EXACTLY AM I SUPPOSED TO PROTECT HER?
GEEZ, NARA. THERE'S ENOUGH HERE TO START A SMALL ARMY.
NOW YOU'RE GETTING IT.

DARLINGTON HILLS POLICE
EXCUSE ME. I'M HERE TO SEE HENRICK STRAUSS.
YOU HIS DAUGHTER?
NO. I'M A MEMBER OF HIS CHURCH. I JUST WANT TO SEE HOW HE'S DOING.
JUST A SECOND. WHAT IS IT, MIKE?
NEW ORDERS STRAIGHT FROM THE CHIEF, EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY. MAKE SURE THIS GETS DISTRIBUTED TO ALL UNITS.
WILL DO.
RIGHT. WELL, TURN AROUND. BASTARD'S RIGHT BEHIND YOU.
OKAY, SORRY ABOUT THAT. YOU WERE SAYING?
HENRICK STRAUSS...

NO...
WHAT HAPPENED?!
REVENGE. SOME OF THE BOYS HE HAPPENED TO BE LOCKED UP WITH WERE MARKED. YOU CAN IMAGINE THEY WEREN'T TOO HAPPY TO HEAR ABOUT WHAT HE'D DONE. RIGHT OR WRONG, HE HAD IT COMING.
HE DIDN'T DO IT.
THE EVIDENCE APPEARS TO SAY OTHERWISE.
WHY WAS HE EVEN IN THE SAME CELL WITH THEM ANYWAY? DON'T YOU PEOPLE HAVE PROCEDURES AGAINST THAT KIND OF THING?
LOOK, I'M SORRY. WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO ASK YOU TO LEAVE NOW. UNLESS YOU'D LIKE TO STAY, PERHAPS GIVE US A STATEMENT REGARDING MR. STRAUSS'S EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES. MAYBE WHO HE ASSOCIATES WITH...

THIS IS BULL$%*#! HE WAS MURDERED AND YOU JUST LET IT HAPPEN!
AAAHHH!! HOT!!
DAMN IT! YOU LITTLE SKANK! WATCH WHAT THE HELL YOU'RE DOING! I'VE GOT THIRD DEGREE BURNS HERE!
ALL RIGHT! THAT'S ENOUGH OUT OF YOU! LET'S GO.
TAKE YOUR HANDS OFF ME! YOU'RE GOING TO HEAR FROM MY LAWYER! I'LL SUE THE WHOLE DEPARTMENT!

URGENT
For Immediate Release:
By Executive Order, Darlington Hills Quarantine Camp to be closed down at 11 pm tonight. All quarantined subjects will be transferred to the care of Zachary Pitch. Police escort will be provided to ensure the safe transfer of subjects to the Children of Eden compound.
I'VE GOT YOU NOW, YOU SON OF A BITCH.
THE FIFTH ANGEL SOUNDED HIS TRUMPET, AND I SAW A STAR THAT HAD FALLEN FROM THE SKY TO THE EARTH. THE STAR WAS GIVEN THE KEY TO THE ABYSS.
WHEN THE ABYSS WAS OPENED, SMOKE ROSE FROM IT LIKE SMOKE FROM A GIGANTIC FURNACE. THE SUN AND SKY WERE DARKENED BY THE SMOKE.
AND OUT OF THE SMOKE CAME LOCUSTS ...THEY HAD A KING OVER THEM, THE ANGEL OF THE ABYSS... THE DESTROYER.

HEY! TAKE IT EASY, ALL RIGHT? YOU'RE STARTING TO FREAK ME OUT.
THE BEAST... THE DRAGON GAVE THE BEAST HIS POWER AND AUTHORITY ... POWER TO MAKE WAR ON THE SAINTS AND TO CONQUER THEM...
KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!
SIT TIGHT. AND TRY TO REFRAIN FROM ANYMORE DOOMSDAY PROPHECIES, OKAY?
OH! HEY, MATT! WHAT'S UP?
IS SARA HERE?
SARA? OH, RIGHT. SARA. UM, NO...SHE'S NOT ACTUALLY.
LOOK. I KNOW SHE'S BEEN AVOIDING ME. I'VE BEEN TRYING TO CALL HER FOR TWO DAYS.
WHOA! NICE TRIBAL, DUDE. WHEN DID YOU JOIN THE IN-CROWD?

I REALLY NEED TO TALK TO HER.
I SAID SHE'S NOT HERE!
YOU... IT'S NOT SARA. YOU'RE THE ONE IN MY HEAD!
I'M WARNING YOU. YOU'D BETTER BACK THE EFF UP.
IF ANYONE WORSHIPS THE BEAST AND ITS IMAGE AND RECEIVES ITS MARK ON THEIR FOREHEAD OR HAND, THEY WILL DRINK OF THE WINE OF GOD'S FURY...
THEY WILL BE TORMENTED WITH BURNING SULFUR IN THE PRESENCE OF HIS HOLY ANGELS...
SHUT UP! SHUT UP!
THEN I HEARD A VOICE FROM HEAVEN SAY, "WRITE: BLESSED ARE THE DEAD WHO DIE IN THE LORD FROM NOW ON."
GET AWAY FROM HER!
SMA!

ALL RIGHT. I TRIED TO WARN YOU.
BEHOLD THE RISE OF THE DARK ONE, THE COMPLETION OF THE UNHOLY TRINITY. FATHER, SON, AND UNCLEAN SPIRIT.
SHUT UP!
UHNN...
URR...ARRHHHH
AKK

GURRAAHHH
SMASH!
THUK
URRK

SO, THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT, HUH? NOT SO BAD, BUT GOOD LORD...THE SMELL! YOU SMELL THAT, HAZY? JIMINY CHRISTMAS. ARE THEY ALL THIS BAD?
HAZY?

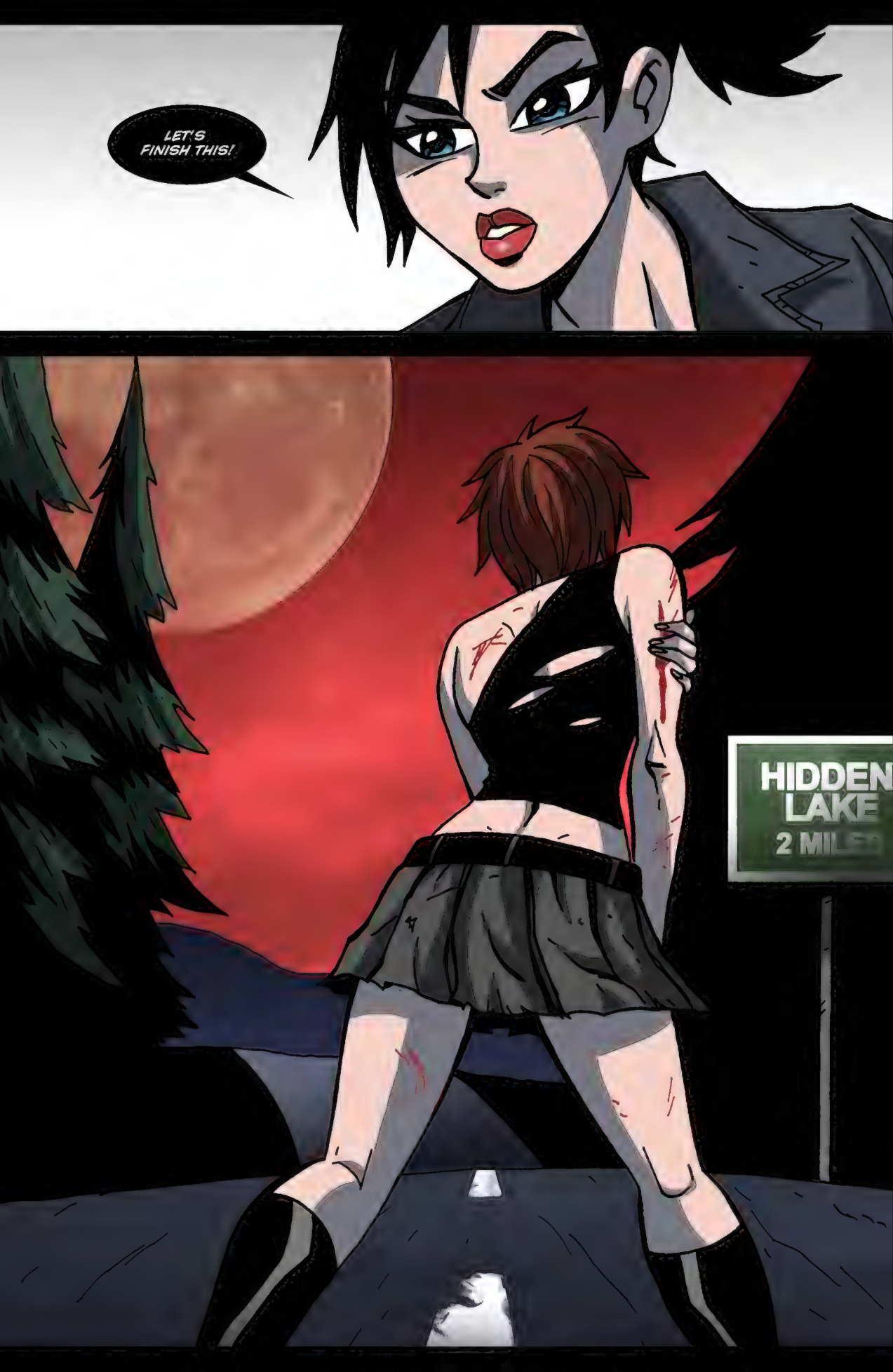
10:45. STILL NO PITCH. NO POLICE. NOTHING. GETTING ANXIOUS. THIS COULD BE MY ONE SHOT. PITCH'S COMPOUND IS TOO HEAVILY PROTECTED. BETWEEN THE MEDIA AND HIS SECURITY FORCE, IT WOULD TAKE A SMALL ARMY TO GET TO HIM. IF I DON'T DO THIS HERE, NOW, I MIGHT NOT GET ANOTHER CHANCE.
MY GUT TELLS ME SOMETHING ISN'T RIGHT. THERE SHOULD HAVE BEEN SOME ACTIVITY BY NOW...
UNLESS...
QUARANTINE CENTER NO. 47
QUARANTINE CENTER NO. 47
OH, NO.

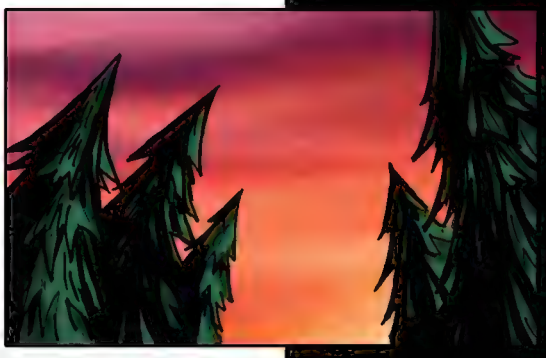
GATE'S UNLOCKED! THERE'S NO ONE HERE! THEY'VE ALREADY GONE THROUGH WITH THE TRANSFER.
THAT MEANS -
WHACK!

YOU'RE MAKING THIS TOO EASY ON ME.
HELLO, ABE. YOU'RE LOOKING YOUNGER AND MORE...MOBILE SINCE LAST I SAW YOU.
AND YOU. YOU'RE JUST AS GULLIBLE AND EASILY MANIPULATED AS EVER.
SO. YOU SET ME UP.
HMMPH. LIKE SOME EVIL MASTERMIND, PULLING ALL THE STRINGS? YOU GIVE ME TOO MUCH CREDIT. NO, I'M JUST AN OBSERVER. I WATCH AND LEARN AND THEN ADAPT.
YOU DID MOST OF THE WORK YOURSELF. YOU'VE MADE A LOT OF ENEMIES, NARA. AND THE ENEMIES OF MY ENEMY ARE MY FRIENDS.
WELL, HERE I AM. YOU GOT ME. BUT WITHOUT HAZY I WON'T DO YOU MUCH GOOD.
THE WHEELS ARE ALREADY IN MOTION. AND I'M A PATIENT MAN.
EVEN IF YOU MANAGE TO GET YOUR HANDS ON HER, IT STILL WON'T BE ENOUGH. YOU'LL NEED OUR COOPERATION, AND THAT'S SOMETHING YOU'LL NEVER HAVE.
YOUR FRIEND IS SUFFERING. IF YOU DON'T HELP HER RELEASE THE KEY AND OPEN THE ABYSS, SHE WILL DIE. THE KEY WILL THEN FIND A NEW HOST, AND THIS DANCE WILL CONTINUE.
THINK IT OVER, BUT YOUR OPTIONS ARE FEW. IN THE MEANTIME, MY FRIENDS HERE HAVE BEEN WANTING SOME ALONE TIME WITH YOU. AS YOU CAN IMAGINE, THEY'RE PRETTY UPSET OVER YOUR HATE CRIMES AGAINST THEIR BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

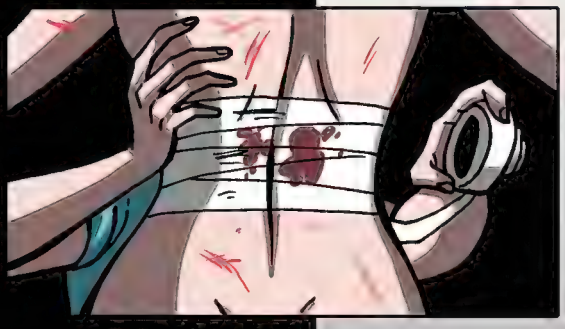
ALL RIGHT, GENTLEMEN. SHE'S ALL YOURS TO DO WITH AS YOU WISH. HAVE YOUR FUN, BUT I NEED HER ALIVE. THE ABILITY TO WALK WOULD BE PLUS, BUT NOT A REQUIREMENT.
HOLD HER DOWN, BOYS.

NARA!
NARA, GET UP!
ASIA?
IT'S TIME, NARA.


LET'S FINISH THIS!
HIDDEN LAKE
2 MILES



NARA, ARE YOU ***SURE*** ABOUT THIS? YOU SHOULD BE IN THE ***HOSPITAL*** RIGHT NOW, NOT PLOTTING YOUR ***REVENGE.***



THIS ***ISN'T*** ABOUT REVENGE. BESIDES, WE'RE OUT OF TIME. THIS IS - ***OUCH! TAKE IT EASY!***

SORRY! DO YOU WANT TO AT LEAST ***TALK*** ABOUT IT? WHAT THEY ***DID*** TO YOU -

I SAID ***NO.***

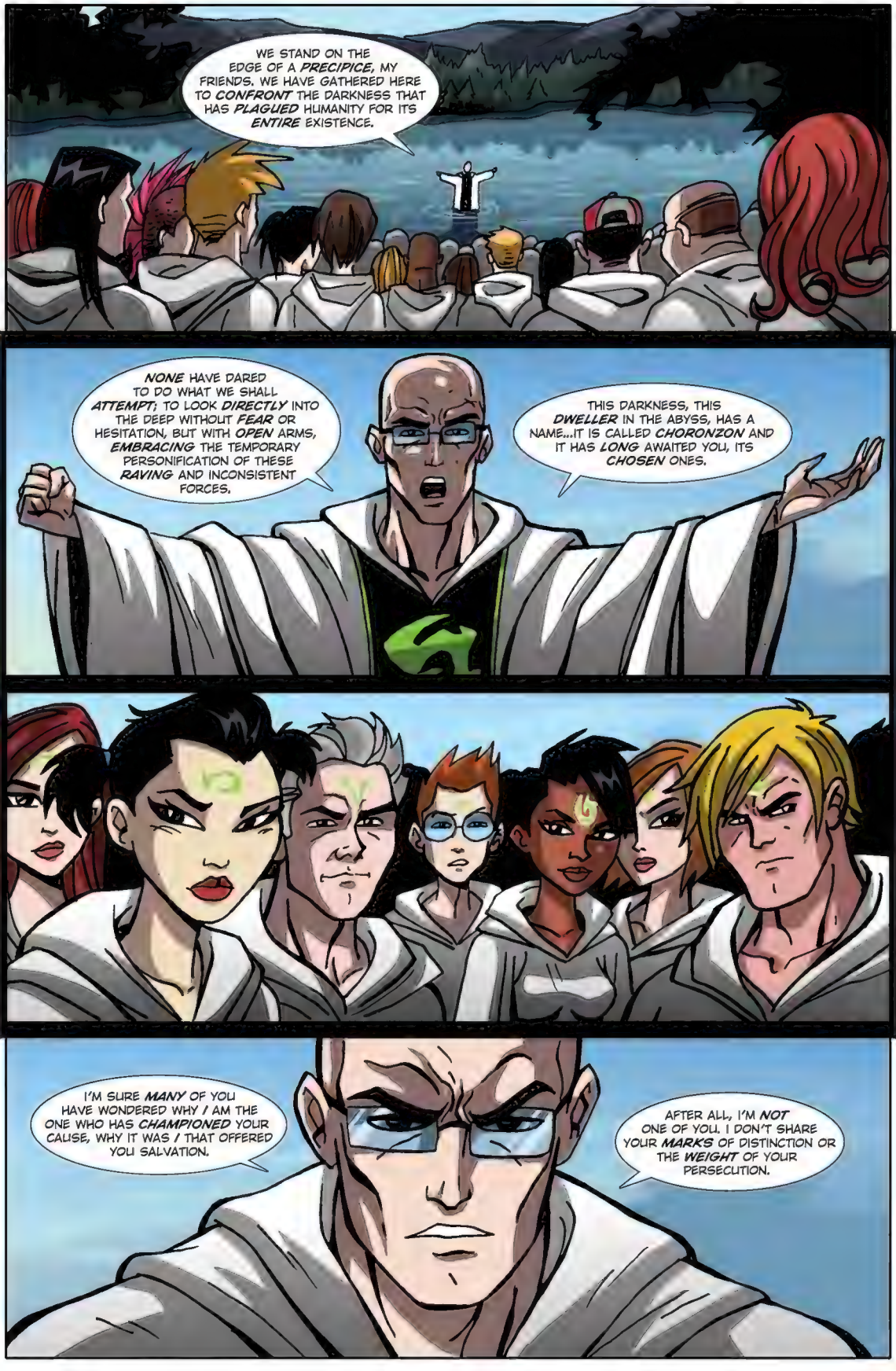
FINE. BUT YOU CAN'T KEEP IT BOTTLED UP ***FOREVER.*** IT'LL ***KILL*** YOU.

I'VE BEEN DEAD BEFORE.

CHAPTER 4

BREE, THERE *IS* SOMETHING I NEED TO TELL YOU. / -
I ***KNOW.*** IT'S ALL OVER TV. THEY'RE PRACTICALLY ***CELEBRATING.***
I'M ***SO*** SORRY, BREE. I ***WISH*** I KNEW WHAT TO SAY. HE WOULD STILL BE ***ALIVE*** IF IT WASN'T FOR ***ME.*** IF I COULD DO IT ALL OVER...

NO. I CHOSE TO GET INVOLVED. THIS IS ON ME.
JUST LEAVE THIS HELLHOLE, BREE. LEAVE AND NEVER LOOK BACK. GET OUT WHILE YOU CAN, BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.
NO, I'M NOT RUNNING. I'M GOING TO SEE THIS THROUGH TO THE END WITH YOU, NO MATTER WHAT.
HE WAS YOUR FATHER. YOU NEED TO TAKE TIME TO GRIEVE.
I'LL GRIEVE IN MY OWN TIME. RIGHT NOW, I NEED TO DO THIS. FOR HIM, AND FOR ME.
BY THE WAY, THAT GUY MATT THAT'S BEEN STALKING YOU? WELL, HE WON'T BE CALLING YOU AGAIN. EVER.


WE STAND ON THE EDGE OF A PRECIPICE, MY FRIENDS. WE HAVE GATHERED HERE TO CONFRONT THE DARKNESS THAT HAS PLAGUED HUMANITY FOR ITS ENTIRE EXISTENCE.
NONE HAVE DARED TO DO WHAT WE SHALL ATTEMPT; TO LOOK DIRECTLY INTO THE DEEP WITHOUT FEAR OR HESITATION, BUT WITH OPEN ARMS, EMBRACING THE TEMPORARY PERSONIFICATION OF THESE RAVING AND INCONSISTENT FORCES.
THIS DARKNESS, THIS DWELLER IN THE ABYSS, HAS A NAME...IT IS CALLED CHORONZON AND IT HAS LONG AWAITED YOU, ITS CHOSEN ONES.
I'M SURE MANY OF YOU HAVE WONDERED WHY I AM THE ONE WHO HAS CHAMPIONED YOUR CAUSE, WHY IT WAS I THAT OFFERED YOU SALVATION.
AFTER ALL, I'M NOT ONE OF YOU. I DON'T SHARE YOUR MARKS OF DISTINCTION OR THE WEIGHT OF YOUR PERSECUTION.

WHO AM I TO OFFER YOU HOPE AND TO DELIVER YOUR ENEMIES INTO YOUR HANDS? WHO AM I TO DO THESE THINGS?
I AM THE WANDERER BETWEEN WORLDS. I HAVE BEEN TO DARK PLACES AND SEEN UNSPEAKABLE THINGS.
IT WAS IN THESE DARK PLACES THAT A VOICE CALLED TO ME AND TOLD ME THE FUTURE. THE VOICE TOLD ME MY TRUE NAME AND REVEALED MY DESTINY.
I AM TO-MEGA-THERION, AND I WAS SENT HERE TO BE YOUR LIGHT AND YOUR GUIDE THROUGH THESE DARK DAYS, TO STRIKE DOWN YOUR ENEMIES AND TO PREPARE THE WAY FOR ENLIGHTENMENT.
NOW IS THE TIME, MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS. NOW IS THE TIME TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP TOWARDS OUR DESTINIES.

I'M SO GLAD YOU'VE DECIDED TO JOIN US. THIS IS GOING TO BE -
AAAAAAAIIIIEEEE!!!
SOMEBODY HELP! THE KILLER'S BACK!!
THUK
SURPRISE.

STAND DOWN, EVERYONE! STAND DOWN! WAS THIS BLOODSHED REALLY NECESSARY? WE ARE GATHERED HERE IN PEACE!
YOU CAN SAY THAT WITH A STRAIGHT FACE. I'M IMPRESSED.
WHY ARE YOU HERE, GEMINI? HAVE YOU COME FOR REVENGE? OR HAVE YOU FINALLY ACCEPTED YOUR DESTINY?
NOPE. I'M JUST HERE FOR SOME GOOD OLD FASHIONED MURDER AND MAYHEM...
...STARTING WITH YOU!

SHUK!
AAAAAHHHH!

HELP ME GET HIM TO SHORE!
BREE, WATCH OUT! YOU'RE GOING TOO FAR!

URK!
AK!
THAK!
SHIK!

DON'T LET THEM ESCAPE WITH THE KEY!
NARA! A LITTLE HELP HERE!
I'M WORKING ON IT!
HOLD THEM OFF, BREE!
WITH A KNIFE? ARE YOU SERIOUS?

HAZY! CAN YOU HEAR ME?
NARA... I'M SO SORRY...
YOU HAVE NOTHING TO BE SORRY FOR. YOU'VE DONE FINE. YOU DID EVERYTHING YOU COULD.
KILDAY! WHATEVER YOU'RE GOING TO DO, DO IT NOW!
THIS IS IT, ISN'T IT?
I CAN'T DO IT, HAZY! DAMN IT, I JUST CAN'T!
PLEASE... I'M TIRED. DO IT FOR ME. I JUST WANT TO BE WITH MY DAUGHTER AGAIN.
COME ON, NARA. BE BRAVE FOR ME.
I LOVE YOU, HAZY.

AAAAAHHH!
SHHHHH

HAZY? HAZY! TALK TO ME!
IT'S SO... PEACEFUL.
NARA, I...
NO! GOD, PLEASE NO!!
FOOOOSH

LET'S GO, NARA! THERE'S SOME SERIOUS, END OF THE WORLD $#*! ABOUT TO GO DOWN!
SHE'S DEAD...
I KNOW. AND WE WILL BE, TOO, IF WE DON'T GET OUT OF HERE!
SHOOOM
YES! THIS IS IT!

BREE! TAKE HAZY AND GET OUT OF HERE. NOW!
KEY WIELDER... YOU HAVE MY GRATITUDE. I WILL GRANT YOU WHATEVER YOU DESIRE - POWER, WEALTH, SEX. ALL YOU MUST DO IS SERVE ME.
PISS OFF!
VERY WELL

I BAPTIZE YOU IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON, AND MY UNHOLY SPIRIT.

IT'S FINISHED.
YOU MAY GO NOW.

NARA.
NARA!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT'S REALLY YOU.
JOAN?

WELCOME...
...TO PURGATORY.

BOOK 6

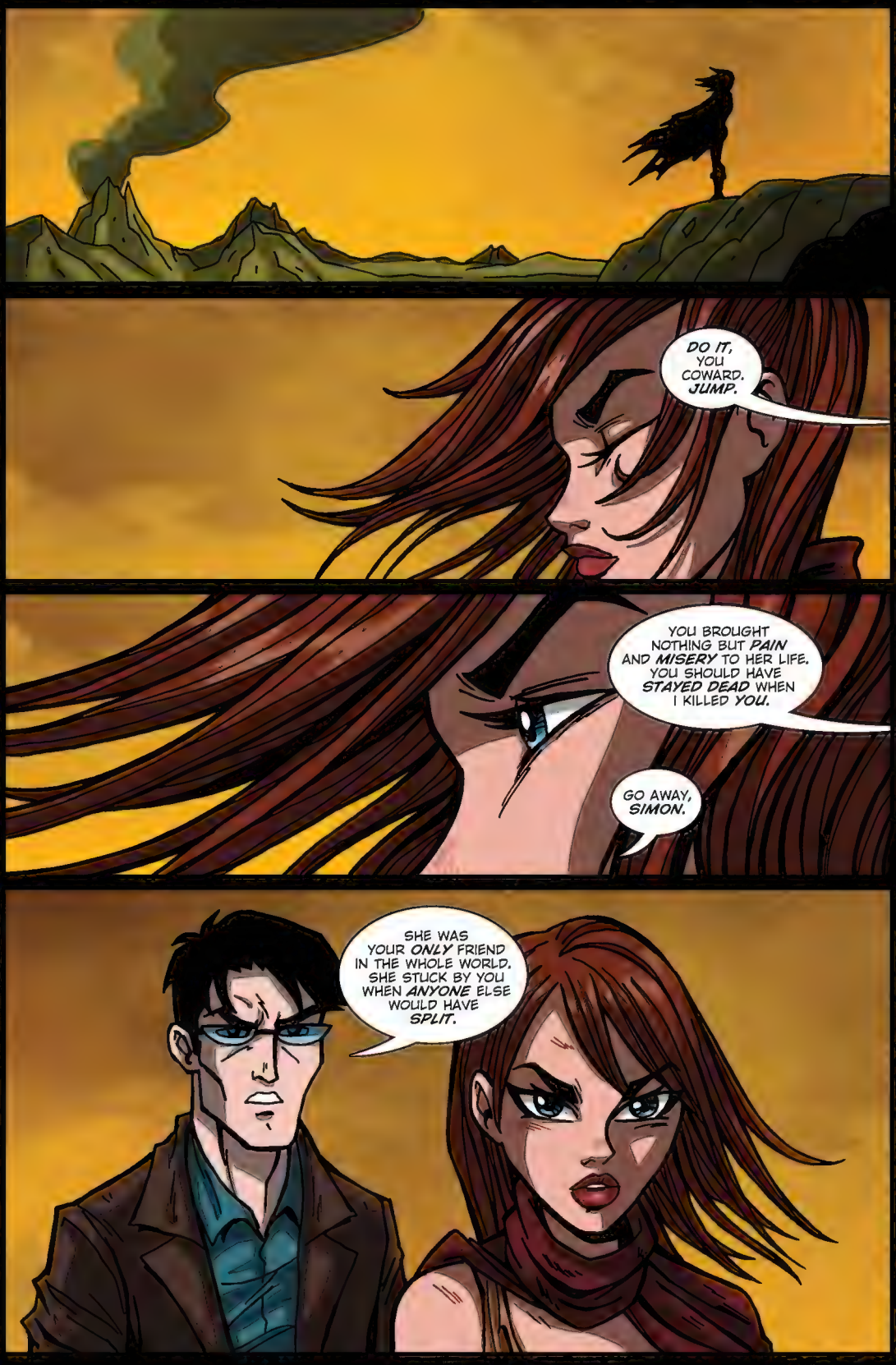
the witch queen

CHAPTER 1

UUURR!!

NICELY DONE. LOOKS LIKE THE *KILLING INSTINCT* IS ALIVE AND WELL IN YOU.
NOT THAT I EVER DOUBTED IT.

EARTH. *PURGATORY.* MAKES NO DIFFERENCE. *WHEREVER* YOU GO, *DEATH* FOLLOWS.
YOU WILL *NEVER* BE ABLE TO WASH *HER* BLOOD FROM YOUR HANDS.
NOOOOOOO!!


DO IT, YOU COWARD. JUMP.
YOU BROUGHT NOTHING BUT PAIN AND MISERY TO HER LIFE. YOU SHOULD HAVE STAYED DEAD WHEN I KILLED YOU.
GO AWAY, SIMON.
SHE WAS YOUR ONLY FRIEND IN THE WHOLE WORLD. SHE STUCK BY YOU WHEN ANYONE ELSE WOULD HAVE SPLIT.

AND YOU REWARDED HER LOYALTY WITH A KNIFE IN HER GUT!
SHUT YOUR MOUTH OR I'LL SHUT IT FOR YOU.
YOU DESERVE THIS, NARA. YOU DESERVE TO DIE HERE, ALONE.
ALRIGHT. I WARNED YOU!!
AAAAAAAHH!!

WAKE UP, KID.
YOU'VE BEEN OUT FOR HOURS.
S...SIMON?

MY NAME IS DEFINITELY NOT SIMON.
HERE...
DRINK THIS.
I FOUND YOU OUTSIDE, FACE DOWN IN THE DIRT. THE SAND WORMS WERE ABOUT TO MAKE A MEAL OF YOU.
LET ME GUESS. YOU'RE THE GHOST OF CHRISTMAS FUTURE.
HEH... NOT QUITE. JOAN IS WORRIED ABOUT YOU. SHE WANTS YOU TO COME BACK.
SO SHE SENT YOU TO TALK SOME SENSE INTO ME?
WELL, YOU CAN GO TELL JOAN THAT I DON'T EXPECT HER OR YOU OR ANYONE ELSE TO UNDERSTAND, ALL RIGHT?
I JUST WANT TO BE LEFT THE HELL ALONE.

I'M NOT JOAN'S ERRAND BOY. SHE DIDN'T SEND ME TO TALK TO YOU.
THEN WHO ARE YOU?
YOU CAN CALL ME MEL.
MEL? WHY ARE YOU HERE, MEL?
JUST THOUGHT YOU'D LIKE TO KNOW THAT YOU'VE ATTRACTED THE ATTENTION OF THE WITCH QUEEN.
WITCH QUEEN, HUH? IS THERE A WIZARD, A SCARECROW, AND A COWARDLY LION AS WELL?
DON'T FORGET THE TIN-MAN.

SERIOUSLY, THOUGH. SHE'S COMING FOR YOU WHETHER YOU LIKE IT OR NOT. MIGHT AS WELL BE READY.
LOOK. I DON'T CARE. THIS WITCH QUEEN WILL GET NO FIGHT FROM ME. I'M DONE!
I'M NOT A PART OF THIS ANYMORE. I'VE DONE EVERY-THING THAT WAS ASKED OF ME.
I'VE SACRIFICED MY LIFE AND EVERY-ONE I EVER CARED ABOUT.
I'VE GOT NOTHING LEFT TO GIVE... NOTHING LEFT TO FIGHT FOR.
I'M SORRY YOU FEEL THAT WAY. SHALL WE TALK ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE THEN?
YOU'RE NOT ALL THERE, ARE YOU? I DON'T WANT TO TALK. I JUST WANT-
-TO BE LEFT ALONE. I HEARD YOU THE FIRST TIME.
SO THIS IS IT FOR YOU? YOU JUST PLAN TO SIT HERE AND WASTE AWAY PLAYING CAVE GIRL FOR ALL ETERNITY?
WHAT'S IT TO YOU?
NOTHING. BUT I'M SURE HAZY WOULD HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT IT.

AAAAAHHH!!
SMACK!
SMACK!

NARA!
SEE? YOU DO STILL HAVE SOME FIGHT LEFT IN YOU.
WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU ARE? YOU DON'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT HER!
SHE WAS INNOCENT! SHE WAS INNOCENT AND I DESTROYED HER LIFE!
HAZY WAS A GOOD FRIEND TO YOU, BUT SHE WAS FAR FROM INNOCENT.
SHE WAS FULLY CAPABLE OF MAKING HER OWN DECISIONS, AND SHE MADE PLENTY OF TERRIBLE ONES, ESPECIALLY DURING THE TIMES WHEN YOU WERE ABSENT FROM HER LIFE.
IF ANYTHING, YOUR INFLUENCE KEPT HER FROM FALLING FURTHER INTO DARKNESS.
YOU GAVE HER LIFE, NARA.
I KILLED HER... WITH MY OWN TWO HANDS. SHE WAS THE PERSON I LOVED THE MOST AND I KILLED HER.
YES, YOU DID. AND IT HAD TO BE DONE. NOT FOR YOU. NOT FOR HER. BUT FOR ALL OF US.
WHY ME? WHY HAZY? OF ALL THE PEOPLE IN ALL THE WORLD...
BECAUSE I CHOSE YOU.
WHAT? WHAT DO YOU MEAN, YOU CHOSE?
MY FULL NAME IS MELCHIZEDEK. I CREATED THE ZODIAC.
IF YOU WANT TO BLAME ANYONE, BLAME ME. NOT GOD, NOT ANGELS, NOT DEMONS. ME.

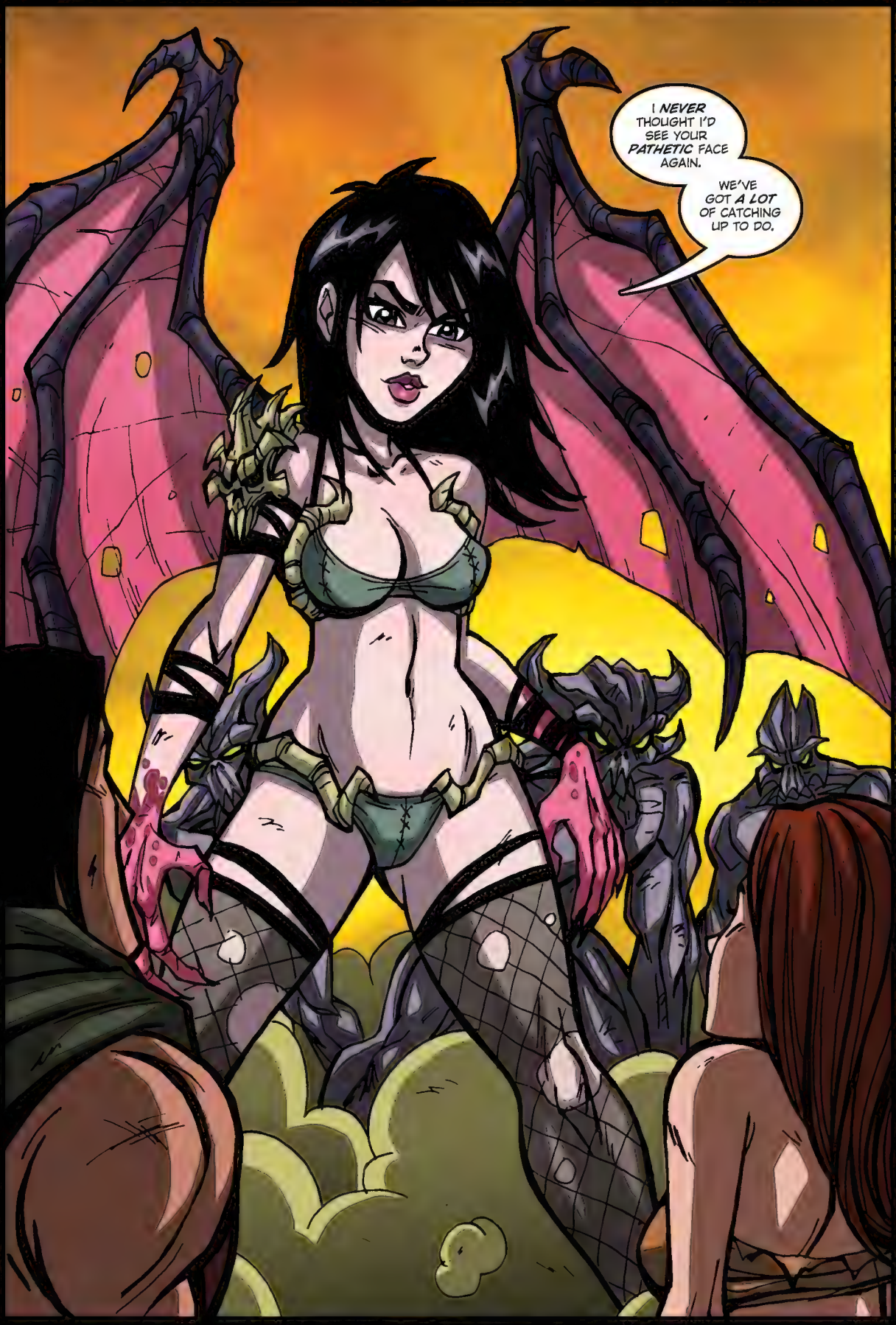
WHATEVER. MOCK ME ALL YOU WANT.
I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU *REALLY* ARE, AND I DON'T REALLY *CARE*. I JUST WANT YOU *GONE*.
FINE. IF YOU'LL JUST ALLOW ME SHELTER FOR THE NIGHT, I PROMISE TO BE GONE *FIRST THING* IN THE MORNING.
STAY ON *THAT SIDE* OF THE CAVE. DON'T *TOUCH* ME, DON'T COME *NEAR* ME.
DON'T EVEN *TALK* TO ME. IF YOU *SNORE*, YOU'LL WAKE UP AT THE BOTTOM OF THE CLIFF. *GOT IT?*

AWAKE? GOOD. I'M STARVING.

YOUR BLOOD. IT SMELLS *BITTER.* LIKE *DEATH*
GOOD. I HOPE YOU *CHOKE.*
HAHAHA!
I *LIKE* YOU. YOU'LL MAKE DUE UNTIL I GET MY HANDS ON YOUR *OTHER HALF.*
NARA HAS EXPERIENCED *RESURRECTION.* HER BLOOD WILL BE *ESPECIALLY* SWEET.
DON'T BE *JEALOUS,* THOUGH. I'M SURE I CAN FIND.... *OTHER* USES FOR YOU.
#@!$ YOU.
OOOOH, SUCH A *DIRTY* MOUTH. ARE YOU *SURE* YOU'RE NOT FIGHTING FOR THE *WRONG* SIDE? WE COULD MAKE A *GREAT* TEAM.
NOW LET'S HAVE A *TASTE.*

NO...NO...
ASIA!?
HEHEHEH... I THINK SHE'S CONFUSED BOYS.
WE'LL HAVE TO SET HER STRAIGHT.
I WOULDN'T.

HEY!
GOOD MORNING!
I TRIED LEAVING. BUT THESE FINE GENTLEMEN JUST WOULDN'T HAVE IT.
NARA KILDAY.


I NEVER THOUGHT I'D SEE YOUR PATHETIC FACE AGAIN.
WE'VE GOT A LOT OF CATCHING UP TO DO.

CHAPTER 2
THIS ISN'T NECESSARY. I'M NOT GOING TO FIGHT YOU.
HMMPH. WHY SHOULD I BELIEVE YOU? YOU'RE ALL A BUNCH OF LIARS.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU -
YOU. THE ZODIAC. I WAS USED UP AND THROWN AWAY LIKE GARBAGE BY YOU AND YOUR FRIENDS.

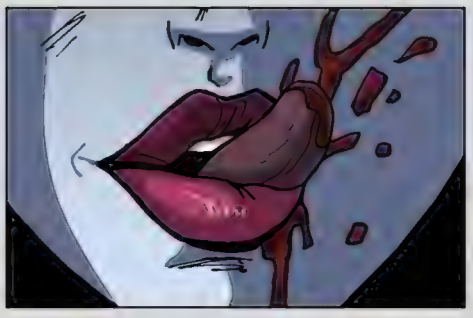
K-KRAK!
YOU'RE TAKING YOUR HATRED OUT ON THE WRONG PERSON.
I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW ABOUT THE ZODIAC UNTIL A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO.
BELIEVE ME, AFTER ALL THEY'VE PUT ME THROUGH, I'VE GOT NO LOVE FOR THEM EITHER.
THEN WHY ARE YOU WITH HIM?
HIM? YOU MEAN MEL? I DON'T EVEN KNOW HIM.
HE JUST SHOWED UP LAST NIGHT CLAIMING TO BE THE LEADER OF THE ZODIAC.
AT LEAST HE'S TELLING YOU THE TRUTH ABOUT SOMETHING.
SO IT'S TRUE? HOW DO YOU KNOW HIM?
WE'VE HAD OUR RUN-INS.
WHAT'S YOUR BEEF WITH HIM - THE ZODIAC. ARE YOU -
ONE OF THEM? NO.

BUT I CAN SEE WHERE YOU WOULD THINK THAT. AFTER ALL, I WAS RESURRECTED JUST LIKE YOU AND THE REST OF THEM.
BUT IT TURNS OUT IT WAS ALL JUST A PLOY TO TRICK BOLABOGG INTO THINKING I WAS ONE OF THEM. I WAS RESURRECTED TO THROW THE SCENT OFF YOU. I WAS USED, PLAIN AND SIMPLE.
THERE WAS NEVER MEANT TO BE ANY REDEMPTION FOR THE MESSED UP LITTLE GIRL WITH DADDY ISSUES.
AND YOU KNOW ALL THIS HOW?
ON EARTH, AFTER JOAN KILLED ME, MY BODY WAS PULLED INTO THE PORTAL THAT YOU OPENED WHEN FIGHTING BOLABOGG. THEN I WOKE UP HERE.
MEL CAME TO ME AND CONFESSED EVERYTHING. SAID IT WAS HIS MORAL DUTY TO LET ME KNOW WHAT REALLY HAPPENED.
I ASKED HIM WHERE HIS MORAL DUTY WAS IN GIVING ME OVER TO A DEMON LORD, BUT HE HAD NO ANSWER FOR THAT, OF COURSE.
SPEAKING OF DEMONS, WHAT'S UP WITH YOUR LITTLE ENTOURAGE?
THEY'RE THE REMNANTS OF LEGION. I COULDN'T SHAKE THEM IF I WANTED TO. EVER SINCE BOLABOGG TURNED THEM OVER TO ME, THEY'VE REMAINED FIERCELY LOYAL.
THEY ANSWER TO NO ONE ELSE. NOT EVEN THE WITCH QUEEN.
THIS WITCH QUEEN... IS SHE -
SHUK!

WHAT?! WHAT DID YOU DO?
UMM... I THOUGHT I WAS RESCUING YOU.
WHO SAID I NEEDED RESCUING? YOU...YOU KILLED HER!
DID I MISS SOMETHING?
KLANG!
WE'VE GOT TO GO, NARA. JOAN'S MEN HAVE LEGION INCAPACITATED, BUT THEY WON'T STAY DOWN FOR LONG.

BELIEVE ME, SHE'S RECOVERED FROM MUCH WORSE. SHE'LL BE BACK MAKING OUR LIVES HELL IN NO TIME.
NARA... WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
IF SHE'S NOT DEAD, THEN I'M BRINGING HER WITH US. SHE HAS INFORMATION I NEED.
IF THIS IS ABOUT THE WITCH QUEEN, JOAN AND I CAN TELL YOU ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW.
SORRY. I DON'T TRUST EITHER ONE OF YOU, ESPECIALLY AFTER WHAT YOU DID TO HER.
AND I'M NOT TALKING ABOUT THE ARROW TO THE FACE.
ALTHOUGH THAT CERTAINLY DOESN'T HELP YOUR CASE.

AAAAAAAHHHHHH
I KNOW IT'S PAINFUL. IT'S PART OF MY CURSE.
MY BITE SPREADS A DEADLY TOXIN THAT EVENTUALLY KILLS THE OBJECT OF MY NOURISHMENT.
BUT YOU'VE BEEN MORE RESILIENT THAN MOST. MAYBE SOMETHING TO DO WITH YOUR UNIQUE STATE OF UN-DEATH.
I CAN MAKE IT ALL GO AWAY, THOUGH. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS PARTAKE OF ME, EAT AND DRINK AND YOU WILL BE MADE PERFECT.
PFFFT!



THAT'S WHY I *LIKE* YOU, ASIA. YOU'VE GOT THAT *REBELLIOUS* STREAK THAT KEEPS YOU *INDEPENDENT* AND SO *RESISTANT* TO MANIPULATION.
THAT'S WHY IT'S SO *TRAGIC* TO SEE YOU ACT AS A *PAWN* FOR THE OTHER SIDE. YOU COULD DO *SO* MUCH BETTER.

WHO.... ARE YOU?
I'VE BEEN AN ANGEL AND AN OUTCAST, A GODDESS AND A DEVIL. I'VE BEEN GIVEN MANY NAMES, BUT I DID THE MOST DAMAGE AS LILITH.
THEY'VE TRIED TO ERASE ME FROM HISTORY, BUT THEY CAN'T ERASE ALL THAT. I'VE DONE. MY LEGACY WILL LIVE FOREVER IN MY SONS...
...THE 13 DEMON LORDS.
DON'T YOU MEAN 12? FROM WHAT I HEAR, THE SO-CALLED 13TH BROTHER WAS NOTHING BUT A BIG JOKE.
DON'T YOU EVER SPEAK OF HIM THAT WAY!

MY LITTLE DESTROYER IS BEAUTIFUL AND PERFECT IN EVERY WAY!
ISN'T THAT RIGHT, ABADDON?
NOW, I WANT YOU TO APOLOGIZE TO HIM FOR CALLING HIM A JOKE.

APOLOGIZE!!
YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING ME.
ENTIRE DEMON ARMIES HAVE BOWED BEFORE HIM. WARS HAVE BEEN FOUGHT IN HIS NAME. NOW APOLOGIZE!
YOU AND YOUR DEMON FETUS CAN GO ROT IN HELL.
I THOUGHT WE COULD REACH AN UNDERSTANDING, YOU AND I. BUT CLEARLY YOUR MIND HAS BEEN COMPLETELY WARPED BY THE PEDDLERS OF FALSE SALVATION.
YOU THOUGHT THE FIRST BITE WAS BAD, JUST WAIT. BY THE TIME I'M DONE, YOU WILL BE BEGGING ME TO KILL YOU.

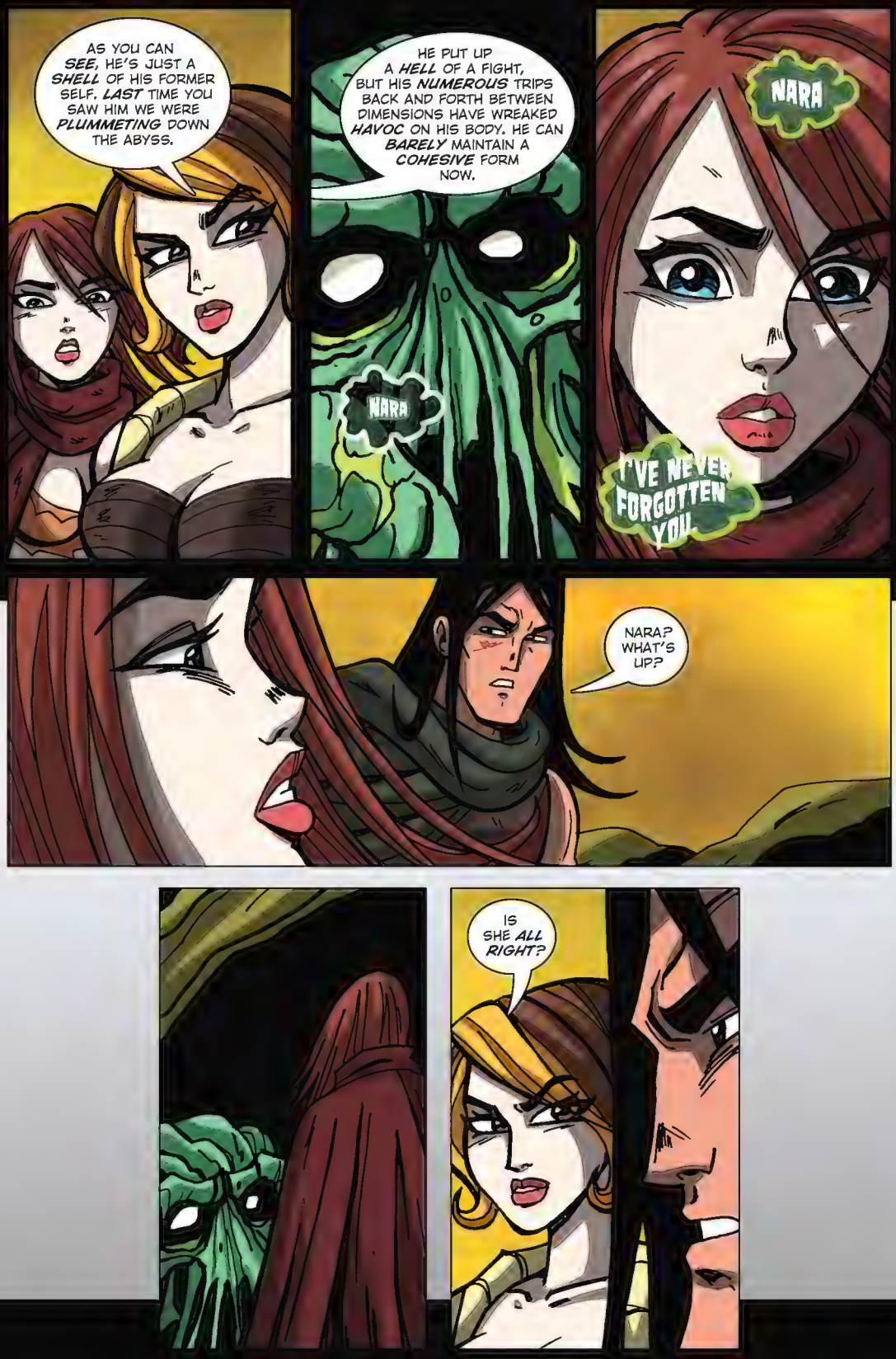
Joan's Base Camp.
HOW IS SHE?
WHY DO YOU CARE?

NARA, PLEASE...
I DON'T KNOW. SHE'S JUST BEEN SHAKING AND CONVULSING FOR THE PAST TWO HOURS.
SHE'S A TOUGH ONE. SHE'LL PULL THROUGH.
WHAT MAKES YOU SO SURE?
LEGION. THEIR SPECIALTY IS THE REANIMATION OF DEAD FLESH. THAT'S WHY THEY USED DEAD BODIES WHEN YOU FOUGHT THEM YEARS AGO.
THEY'VE HEALED AND PUT HER BACK TOGETHER SO MANY TIMES, SHE'S PRACTICALLY BECOMING ONE OF THEM.
SHE TOLD ME WHAT YOU DID. RESURRECTING HER TO USE HER AS A DECOY. HOW CAN YOU JUST PLAY WITH PEOPLE'S LIVES LIKE THAT?
I DON'T EXPECT YOU TO AGREE WITH OR EVEN UNDERSTAND MY DECISIONS.
I'VE BEEN DOING THIS A LONG TIME, NARA. I MADE A JUDGMENT CALL TO PROTECT YOU FROM BOLABOGG.
I DIDN'T NEED PROTECTING. IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED, I'VE DONE A PRETTY GOOD JOB OF TAKING CARE OF MYSELF.
WELL, IF IT MAKES YOU FEEL ANY BETTER, MALACHI DISAGREED WITH ME. THEY PRETTY MUCH ALL DID.
YET YOU SENT HIM TO RESURRECT HER. AFRAID OF GETTING YOUR HANDS DIRTY?

I HAVE TO FOLLOW MY OWN RULES. I MAY HAVE FOUNDED THE ZODIAC, BUT I'M NOT AN ACTIVE AGENT UNTIL I RETURN TO EARTH.
THERE ARE DARK DAYS AHEAD. I ARRANGED IT SO THAT I WOULD BE THE AGENT ON HAND FOR THE END GAME.
HOW NOBLE OF YOU.
I KNOW YOU'RE HAVING A HARD TIME WITH ALL THIS -
A HARD TIME? YOU DON'T KNOW ME, OKAY?
JUST BECAUSE YOU DREW MY NAME OUT OF A COSMIC HAT DOESN'T GIVE YOU THE RIGHT TO DICTATE MY LIFE!
NARA-
AS SOON AS VIOLET IS UP, SHE'S GOING TO TAKE ME TO THIS WITCH QUEEN SO I CAN FREE ASIA.
AFTER THAT, I JUST WANT TO BE LEFT ALONE. FOREVER!
HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT ASIA WAS BEING HELD BY THE WITCH QUEEN?
I SAW HER... IN A DREAM. I'M SORRY. WAS THAT SOMETHING YOU WERE PLANNING ON KEEPING FROM ME, TOO?
IT'S A TRAP, NARA. THE WITCH QUEEN HAS SET HER SIGHTS ON YOU.
I'M NOT LEAVING ASIA TO DIE.
YOU DON'T HAVE TO. JOAN AND I HAVE BEEN WORKING ON A PLAN TO GET HER BACK.
HOW?

ALL RIGHT, BOYS. LET'S DO IT.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND. WHAT'S THE BIG PLAN?
AN EXCHANGE. TO GET THE WITCH QUEEN TO GIVE UP ASIA, WE'RE GOING TO GIVE HER SOMETHING SHE WANTS IN RETURN.

BOLABOGG!
URRRGGGGHHH


AS YOU CAN SEE, HE'S JUST A SHELL OF HIS FORMER SELF. LAST TIME YOU SAW HIM WE WERE PLUMMETING DOWN THE ABYSS.
HE PUT UP A HELL OF A FIGHT, BUT HIS NUMEROUS TRIPS BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN DIMENSIONS HAVE WREAKED HAVOC ON HIS BODY. HE CAN BARELY MAINTAIN A COHESIVE FORM NOW.
NARA
NARA
I'VE NEVER FORGOTTEN YOU
NARA? WHAT'S UP?
IS SHE ALL RIGHT?

KILL THEM... KILL THEM ALL.
KILL THEM AND WE CAN FINALLY BE TOGETHER...AS IT WAS MEANT TO BE
NARA! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
DO IT! KILL HIM NOW!
NOOO!
SHHIKK!

UURRAAAAAGGGG!
BRILLIANT MOVE, NARA! BOLABOGG WAS LILITH'S FIRST BORN! SHE WOULD'VE GIVEN ANYTHING TO GET HIM BACK!
YOU JUST BLEW YOUR ONLY CHANCE AT EVER SEEING ASIA AGAIN!
LET'S FACE IT. YOU'VE NEVER HAD WHAT IT TAKES TO WIN THIS WAR.
YOU'RE JUST A SCARED LITTLE GIRL WHO'S MAD SHE DIDN'T GET TO WASTE HER YOUTH ON BOYS AND SHOPPING!
SMACK!
I HOPE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING.

DAMN IT!
NARA, WAIT! WE NEED TO TALK.
VIOLET'S GONE. I'M GOING AFTER HER
IF YOU TRY TO FOLLOW ME, YOU'LL BE THE ONE WITH THE KNIFE IN HIS FACE.

CHAPTER 3
GETTING CLOSE. SHE CAN'T BE FAR NOW.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WHEN YOU CATCH HER?
SOMEHOW, I DON'T THINK SHE'S GOING TO BE VERY RECEPTIVE TO WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY.
BUT DON'T MIND ME. I'M JUST GOING TO SIT BACK...
...AND WATCH THE FIREWORKS.
KA-THOOM!
GOTCHA!

HANG ON! I'VE GOT YOU!
EASY...
WHAT... WHAT WAS THAT?
TIME IS WINDING DOWN. IT'S NOT JUST PURGATORY. ALL OF CREATION IS STARTING TO FEEL THE EFFECTS. JUST BE EXTRA CAREFUL WHERE YOU STEP.
THANKS FOR THE TIP. AND FOR SAVING ME, I GUESS.
SO...STILL WANT TO STAB ME IN THE FACE?
YOU'RE SUCH AN A-HOLE.
YOU'RE WELCOME.
WERE YOU BORN THIS WAY, OR DO YOU WANT PEOPLE TO HATE YOU?
HARD TO SAY, SINCE I WASN'T REALLY "BORN" IN THE TRADITIONAL SENSE.
WHY AM I NOT SURPRISED?

YOU'RE SUCH A COWARD.
EXCUSE ME?
I DIDN'T SAY ANY-THING.
YOU SAID IF HE TRIED TO FOLLOW YOU YOU'D KILL HIM. SO WHY DON'T YOU DO IT?
DON'T TELL ME YOU HAVE FEELINGS FOR HIM.
I DON'T ANSWER TO YOU.
OOOKAY.
NARA, WAIT! CAN WE TALK?
TURN AROUND AND GO BACK WHILE I'M FEELING GENEROUS.

I'LL TAKE MY CHANCES. BESIDES, YOU CAN'T TAKE ON VIOLET AND LEGION ALONE.
I'M NOT GOING TO FIGHT HER. I'M GOING TO TURN MYSELF OVER TO HER SO SHE'LL TAKE ME TO LILITH.
NO. TOO MANY THINGS COULD GO WRONG. WE'LL FIND ANOTHER WAY.
THERE ISN'T TIME. I HAVE TO DO THIS NOW!

LOOK, I WANT ASIA BACK AS MUCH AS YOU DO, BUT -
TELL HIM TO SHUT UP.
SHUT. UP.
NARA, I'M ON YOUR SIDE. WE CAN TALK THIS OUT.
GET...
...AWAY FROM ME NOW!!

THAT'S IT. TAKE YOUR KNIFE. KILL HIM! DO IT NOW!!
AAAAAAHHH!!
WHAK!

GOT YOU!!
YOU... YOU CAN SEE HIM?
HE WAS TRYING TO HIDE FROM ME, BUT THOSE EYES OF HIS ALWAYS GIVE HIM AWAY.
NARA... HELP ME! -GAK- YOU MAY NOT LIKE ME, BUT YOU NEED ME. DON'T LET HIM KILL ME!
I SHOULD'VE KNOWN. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WHISPERING POISON IN HER EAR?

POISON? I'M A HEALER, A PROPHET. I ONLY SEEK TO SET PEOPLE FREE. YOU CAN APPRECIATE THAT, CAN'T YOU, HIGH PRIEST? I'M HARMLESS, TELL HIM, NARA!
BITE YOUR TONGUE, SNAKE! YOUR SMOOTH WORDS ARE WASTED ON ME.
PLEASE... LET HIM GO!
CLEAR YOUR HEAD, NARA! LOOK AT HIM - NOT WITH YOUR EYES, WITH YOUR MIND. SEE PAST THE ILLUSION.
MY GOD!
GAME'S OVER, NAKASH. SHE FINALLY SEES YOU FOR THE TWISTED, SNIVELING SERPENT YOU REALLY ARE.
SPARE ME, HIGH PRIEST! I CAN MAKE IT WORTH YOUR WHILE. I'VE GOT MANY FRIENDS OF INFLUENCE. I COULD BE A POWERFUL ALLY.

YOU HAVE NO FRIENDS, NAKASH. YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A BITTER LITTLE WORM. I THINK YOU'VE CRAWLED AROUND IN THE DIRT FOR LONG ENOUGH.
I RELEASE YOU FROM YOUR CURSE.
OH, THANK YOU, HIGH PRIEST. YOU ARE SO MERCIFUL AND -
K-KRUNCH!

NARA?
HEY, IT'S OKAY. YOU'RE SAFE.
YOU'RE NOT ALONE. YOU HEAR ME? YOU'RE NOT ALONE. JUST LET GO. OF EVERYTHING.

YOU STILL AWAKE?
YEAH. I... I JUST WANT TO STAY LIKE THIS, IN THIS MOMENT. I'VE NEVER FELT SO... AT PEACE.
WHAT A DAY, HUH? FIRST BOLABOGG, NOW NAKASH...YOU DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I WAITED TO SEE THOSE TWO GET WHAT WAS COMING TO THEM.
WHAT WAS... THAT THING DOING TO ME? I THOUGHT I WAS LOSING MY MIND.
NAKASH WAS DOING WHAT HE'S ALWAYS DONE - LYING AND DECEIVING. HE WAS DIFFERENT, ONCE...
...A VERY MAJESTIC CREATURE, IF YOU CAN BELIEVE THAT. BUT HIS ARROGANCE GOT THE BEST OF HIM. HE MADE A PACT TO BETRAY HUMANITY. THE PRICE OF HIS BETRAYAL WAS - WELL, YOU SAW WHAT WAS LEFT OF HIM.

WHY DID HE YOU CALL YOU HIGH PRIEST?
I USED TO BE ONE. OF COURSE, I'VE BEEN A LOT OF THINGS. I WAS CREATED APART FROM ADAM, SO I NEVER SHARED IN HIS SIN.
BUT I'VE MORE THAN MADE UP FOR IT WITH MY OWN. I FULFILLED THE PLANS GOD HAD FOR ME, THEN ASKED TO BE SENT HERE, TO DO MY PENANCE AND AWAIT MY REWARD.
REWARD?
MY DEVOTION TO GOD CAME WITH A PRICE. I WAS NEVER ALLOWED TO LOVE ANOTHER. BUT WHEN I HAD COMPLETED MY SERVITUDE, WHEN I HAD DONE ALL HE HAD ASKED OF ME, I WAS GRANTED ANYTHING MY HEART DESIRED.
AND WHAT I DESIRED MOST WAS TO LOVE AND TO BE LOVED BY ANOTHER HUMAN BEING. AND SO HERE I'VE SAT, FOR OVER TWO THOUSAND YEARS, WAITING FOR THE DAY WHEN SHE WOULD COME.
WHEN YOU WOULD COME.
WELL, THIS IS UNEXPECTED.

TAKE HIM *DOWN*, BOYS!
TO *THINK* I ALMOST *BELIEVED* YOU WHEN YOU TOLD ME YOU HAD *NO* RELATIONSHIP WITH *HIM*.
I DON'T... I *DIDN'T*. IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK!

I AM GOING TO KILL EVERY LAST ONE OF YOU IF IT TAKES ME AN ETERNITY!
PLEASE... I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT YOU!
DAMN YOU! LEAVE HER ALONE! SHE'S TELLING YOU THE TRUTH!
VIOLET, PLEASE... LISTEN. I'M NOT YOUR ENEMY. I HAD HOPED WE COULD FIND SOME COMMON GROUND.
BELIEVE ME, WE HAVE NOTHING IN COMMON!
WAIT! WAIT! I WANT TO HELP YOU KILL THE WITCH QUEEN!

WHAT MAKES YOU THINK I WANT HER *DEAD*?
FOR THE *SAME* REASON YOU *CLAIM* TO HATE THE ZODIAC. SHE *USES* YOU.
ONLY YOU'RE *LETTING* IT HAPPEN THIS TIME. SHE DOESN'T *CARE* ABOUT YOU, VIOLET.
AND *YOU* DO?
I'M *SORRY* ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU, I *REALLY* AM. YOU WERE NEVER GIVEN A CHANCE TO MAKE YOUR *OWN* PATH.
BUT THAT CAN *CHANGE*. YOU CAN FINALLY BE FREE IF YOU JUST *LET ME* HELP YOU. WE CAN TAKE DOWN LILITH *TOGETHER*. AFTER THAT, THE ZODIAC WILL *NEVER* BOTHER YOU AGAIN, YOU HAVE *MY WORD*. ISN'T THAT RIGHT, MEL?
PURGATORY WILL BE *YOURS* TO RULE AS YOU SEE FIT. YOU'LL GET *NO* INTERFERENCE FROM US.
WHAT'S IN IT FOR *YOU*? WHAT DO *YOU* GET OUT OF THIS?
LILITH'S HOLDING A *FRIEND* OF MINE. I NEED TO FREE HER. *THAT'S IT*.
YOU'RE *WASTING* YOUR TIME. CHANCES ARE YOUR FRIEND IS EITHER *DEAD*...OR SOMETHING *MUCH WORSE*.
I HAVE TO *TRY*.

LEGION. BIND THEIR HANDS.
WAIT! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
I HAVEN'T DECIDED. BUT UNTIL I DO, I'M GOING AHEAD AS PLANNED. I'M TAKING YOU TO THE QUEEN. SHE HAS EYES AND EARS EVERYWHERE.
THE LONGER I DELAY, THE MORE SUSPICIOUS SHE'LL BE. ONCE THERE, I WILL DECIDE THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION. AND IF THAT MEANS LETTING YOU ROT IN HER DUNGEON FOR ALL ETERNITY, THEN SO BE IT.
MY LIFE IS ON THE LINE HERE. I'LL NOT TAKE ANY DECISION TO OVERTHROW HER LIGHTLY.
FINE. I CAN RESPECT THAT. BUT BEFORE WE GO, THERE'S SOMETHING I HAVE TO DO...IN CASE WE DON'T MAKE IT OUT OF THIS ALIVE.

YOU LOOK... AMAZING. WHAT IS THIS ABOUT?
DO I REALLY HAVE TO SPELL IT OUT FOR YOU?
NARA...NOW? I MEAN...WE'VE ONLY JUST-
YOU'RE A PRIEST, AREN'T YOU? SO LET'S SAY SOME VOWS AND GET THIS OVER WITH.
ARE YOU SURE THIS IS WHAT YOU WANT?
MEL, FROM THE MOMENT I MET YOU, I KNEW MY LIFE WOULD NEVER BE THE SAME. YOU MADE ME FEEL SOMETHING I'D NEVER FELT BEFORE - SAFE. AND IT SCARED ME.
I DID EVERYTHING I COULD TO FIGHT WHAT I WAS FEELING. BUT I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT IT ANYMORE. I DON'T WANT TO FIGHT YOU ANYMORE. I JUST WANT US TO BE TOGETHER FOR AS LONG AS WE HAVE LEFT.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY. I -
THEN DON'T SAY ANYTHING. JUST KISS ME.

THE POWERS OF THE AIR HAVE JUST SENT ME A VISION.
VIOLET AND NARA INTEND TO BETRAY US.
ARE YOU READY TO PROVE YOURSELF TO ME?
I WILL DO WHATEVER YOU ASK OF ME, MY QUEEN...
...WE WILL BOTH FEAST ON NARA KILDAY TONIGHT.

WE'RE HERE.

HOLY CRAP.
I'LL HAVE TO *FLY YOU* FROM HERE.

CHAPTER 4

TAKE ME FIRST.
AFRAID NOT. YOU'RE STAYING HERE.
THAT WASN'T PART OF THE DEAL!
THERE IS NO DEAL. THERE IS ONLY WHAT I DECIDE TO ALLOW.
NARA, NO. I DON'T LIKE THIS.
IT'LL BE OKAY. DO YOU TRUST ME?
MEL! DO YOU TRUST ME?
FINE. BUT IF I DON'T HEAR ANYTHING BACK IN AN HOUR, I'M COMING AFTER YOU.
YOU'LL STAY RIGHT HERE UNTIL I SAY OTHERWISE.
LEGION, MAKE SURE HE STAYS PUT.
I'LL BE BACK. I PROMISE.

AAAAAAIIIIHHH!!!
READY?

MOVE IT!
SMACK!

WHO ARE YOU?
KKKAK
KKKAK
YOUR REPLACEMENT.
THUK!

ASIA? WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU?
NARA, YOU HAVE TO GO. YOU HAVE TO GO NOW!
GO? I CAME HERE TO RESCUE YOU!
IT'S TOO LATE. I'VE DONE SOMETHING HORRIBLE.
I WAS WEAK. I... COULDN'T RESIST HER.
I TRIED, NARA. I TRIED SO HARD.
NO... I WON'T LET HER HAVE YOU!

LIKE SHE SAID, YOU'RE TOO LATE. SHE'S ALREADY MINE.
SOON, YOU WILL BE, TOO.
KRAK!
ALL RIGHT BOYS. YOU'VE HAD YOUR FUN. NOW FINISH HIM OFF!

VIOLET... DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT... KILLING ME...
HEHEH... YOU DON'T KNOW HER LIKE WE DO PAL. SHE MADE HERSELF CLEAR.
SHE DON'T WANT YOU GOIN' NO-WHERE AND THAT MEANS DEAD.
ALL HAIL MELCHIZEDEK! KING OF THE WORMS!
THUK!
WHAK!
THUK!

YOU OKAY, BOSS?
YEAH. JUST GLAD YOU DECIDED TO SHOW UP.
SORRY. THAT LITTLE ERRAND YOU HAD US ON TOOK A WHILE LONGER THAN WE THOUGHT.
YOU FIND IT?
IT'S A LITTLE BEAT UP, AS EXPECTED. IT SHOULD STILL DO THE JOB, BUT THE RESULTS COULD BE... UNPREDICTABLE.
THANKS, JOAN. LOOK, I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN NOW. THIS WHOLE ROCK IS COMING APART. I DOUBT IT WILL LAST MUCH LONGER.
IT'S OKAY. MY PART IS DONE. IT'S ALL YOU NOW.
JUST... IF YOU COULD, TELL NARA I'M SORRY FOR ALL THE THINGS I SAID TO HER.
YOU GOT IT. YOU WERE ALWAYS ONE OF MY BEST, JOAN. I WON'T FORGET ALL YOU'VE DONE.
THANKS, BOSS. AND IF YOU HAPPEN TO RUN INTO A CERTAIN TALL, DARK-HAIRED LONER, TELL HIM I SAID HELLO.
WILL DO. SEE YOU ON THE OTHER SIDE, KIDDO.
GO GIVE 'EM HELL.

I ASKED YOU BEFORE IF YOU WERE READY TO PROVE YOURSELF TO ME. NOW'S YOUR CHANCE, ASIA.
WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?
YOU. I WANT YOU. I'VE NEVER HAD THE BLOOD OF A RESURRECTED BEFORE.
IF I'M RIGHT, IT'S GOING TO BE THE ANSWER TO ALL MY PROBLEMS.
YOUR GOD DID THIS TO ME. HE CURSED ME FOR MY INDEPENDENCE BY MAKING ME A SLAVE TO FLESH AND BLOOD.
BUT ONCE I'VE DRUNK FROM YOU, I WILL FINALLY BE FREE.
WHAT A COINCIDENCE! I JUST "FREED" YOUR SON BOLABOGG A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO.
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!
I KILLED HIM. I DROVE A KNIFE INTO HIS SKULL. HE WAS SO WEAK, THAT'S ALL IT TOOK TO REDUCE HIM TO A BUBBLING PILE OF GOO.
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR? TEAR HER THROAT OUT!

ASIA, PLEASE...
I'M SORRY, NARA. I... I CAN'T STOP THIS.
AAAAHH!
HOW DOES IT TASTE?

SEE FOR YOURSELF!
RUUAAAAHHH!!!
RUN! GET OUT OF HERE WHILE YOU STILL CAN!
I'M NOT LEAVING WITHOUT YOU!

HAA

THERE'S A PASSAGE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRWELL. THAT'S YOUR WAY OUT.
I TOLD YOU -
LISTEN TO ME, NARA! IF I DON'T HAVE FLESH AND BLOOD SOON, I'LL DIE. IF I HAVE YOURS, I'LL DIE.
THERE'S NO WAY OUT OF THIS FOR ME!
NO! I DON'T BELIEVE THAT. WE'LL FIND A WAY!
RRRUMBLE!
YOU'D BETTER GO NOW. THIS WHOLE PLACE IS COMING DOWN!
RRRUMBLE!
THONK!
NARA!

ARE YOU OKAY?
I'LL LIVE. ASIA... SHE'S NOT SO GOOD.
I HOPE YOU'VE GOT SOME BRILLIANT IDEA FOR GETTING US OUT OF HERE!
THE KEY!
I HOPED I'D NEVER HAVE TO SEE THAT THING AGAIN.
I KNOW, BUT THIS IS OUR TICKET OUT OF HERE.
I DON'T KNOW...
WHAT'S THE ALTERNATIVE? STAY HERE AND DIE? I UNDERSTAND HOW YOU FEEL, BUT THIS IS OUR ONLY OPTION!
I'LL FOLLOW YOU ANYWHERE, YOU KNOW THAT.
BUT WHAT ABOUT ASIA?
SHE'S ONLY PHYSICAL HERE. HER BODY'S DEAD ON EARTH. WHEN WE GET BACK, THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT WILL HAPPEN.
IF HER SPIRIT RE-JOINS WITH YOURS, THERE'S A DANGER OF HER INFECTION SPREADING TO YOU.
I'M NOT LEAVING HER. BESIDES, IT TAKES BOTH OF US AS GEMINI TO USE THE KEY.
NARA, THERE'S A CHANCE WE COULD BE SEPARATED ON THE RETURN TRIP.
I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, NOTHING WILL KEEP US APART.

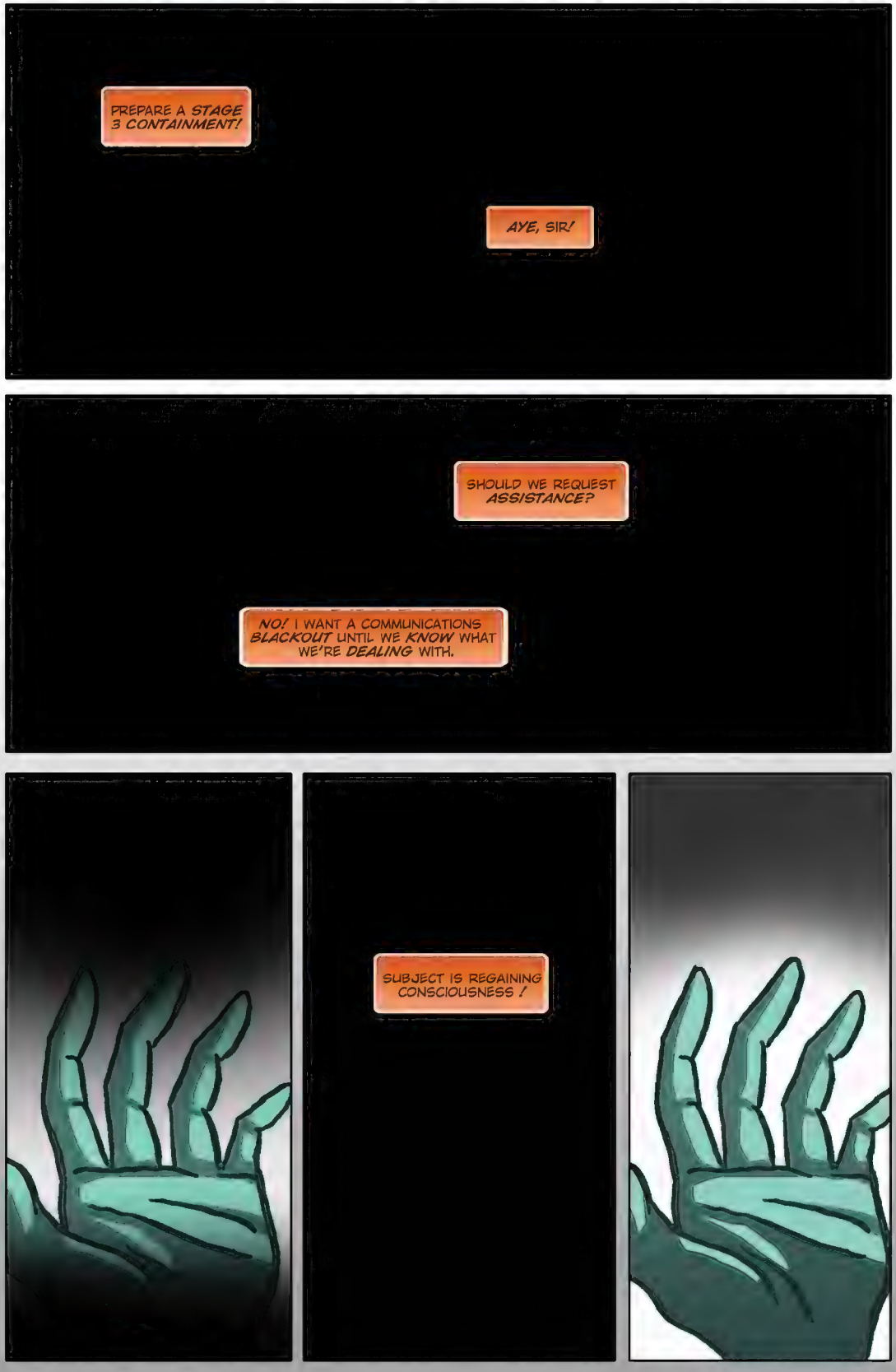
ALL RIGHT, LET'S DO THIS.
FOOOOM
NARA! BEHIND YOU!!

NOOO!!
HOLD ON! I'VE GOT YOU!
NO! YOU'RE COMING WITH ME... TO HELL!
WE'RE ALMOST OUT OF HERE, NARA! JUST HANG ON!
NO! MEL, WAIT!
NARRAAAAAAAA!
WHOOSH!

WHOOSH!
NARA... NO....
NO!
8:00
RE-ELECT

POLICE
FREEZE! HANDS WHERE I CAN SEE THEM!
YOU'RE TRESPASSING IN AN UN-AUTHORIZED ZONE. IDENTIFY YOURSELF AND STATE YOUR BUSINESS!
I AM TAURUS OF ZODIAC. I'VE COME TO BRING THE WRATH OF GOD.
WHACK!
AWW, WHY'D YOU GO AND DO THAT, MIKE? IT'S A SLOW NIGHT. HE WOULD'VE BEEN GOOD FOR A LAUGH OR TWO.
JUST ANOTHER RELIGIOUS NUT. THE SOONER WE GET HIM DOWN TO PROCESSING THE BETTER.
POLICE

LEVEL 7 ALERT!
I REPEAT, LEVEL 7 ALERT!


PREPARE A STAGE 3 CONTAINMENT!
AYE, SIR!
SHOULD WE REQUEST ASSISTANCE?
NO! I WANT A COMMUNICATIONS BLACKOUT UNTIL WE KNOW WHAT WE'RE DEALING WITH.
SUBJECT IS REGAINING CONSCIOUSNESS !

YOU ARE A PRISONER OF THE E.S.V. EQUINOX. COOPERATE, AND YOU MAY FIND MERCY. RESIST, AND YOU WILL FACE JUDGMENT.

EPILOGUE.

HEH.
HAHAHA HA HA HA HAHAHA HA HA HA HAHAHA
HAHAHA HA HA HA HAHAHA HA HA HA HAHAHA
HAHAHA HA HA HA HAHAHA HA HA HA HAHAHA
HAHAHAHA HA HAHA HA HAHA HA HA!!

BOOK 7

the blasphemy throne

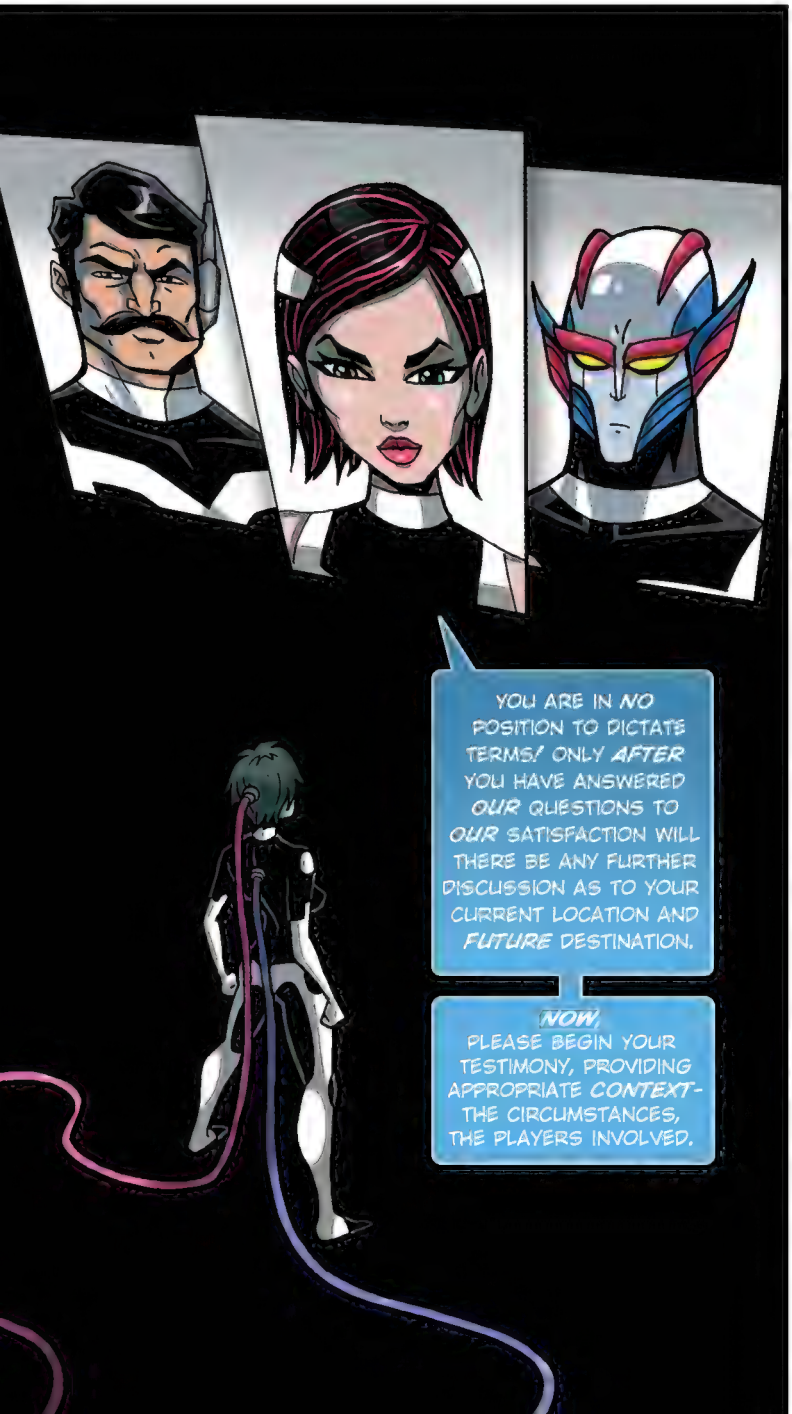
LET'S START AT THE BEGINNING.
CHAPTER 1

WAIT! HOLD IMAGE.
NEED WE REMIND YOU TO KEEP YOUR THOUGHTS RELEVANT TO THE INQUIRY AT HAND?
WELL, THIS IS HOW IT ALL STARTED - WITH ME DYING. SURELY YOU DON'T MEAN THE BEGINNING BEGINNING. YOU KNOW - MY BIRTH AND ALL.
NO ONE WANTS TO SEE THAT.
OR MAYBE I SHOULD START WITH MY 2ND DEATH...

LET'S JUST MAKE IT A BIG PRODUCTION OF "NARA KILDAY: THIS IS YOUR HORRIBLE, JACKED-UP LIFE."
ENOUGH!

NARA LEIGH KILDAY.
THE PURPOSE OF THIS HEARING IS TO ASCERTAIN THE TRUTH OF YOUR EXTRAORDINARY CLAIMS – UNAUTHORIZED RESURRECTIONS, THE CLANDESTINE ZODIAC, YOUR PRESENCE AT PURGATOR.
WE REQUIRE NOTHING LESS THAN YOUR COMPLETE AND TOTAL COOPERATION.
REFUSE, AND WE WILL BE FORCED TO CLASSIFY YOU AS AN ENEMY COMBATANT.
UNDERSTOOD?

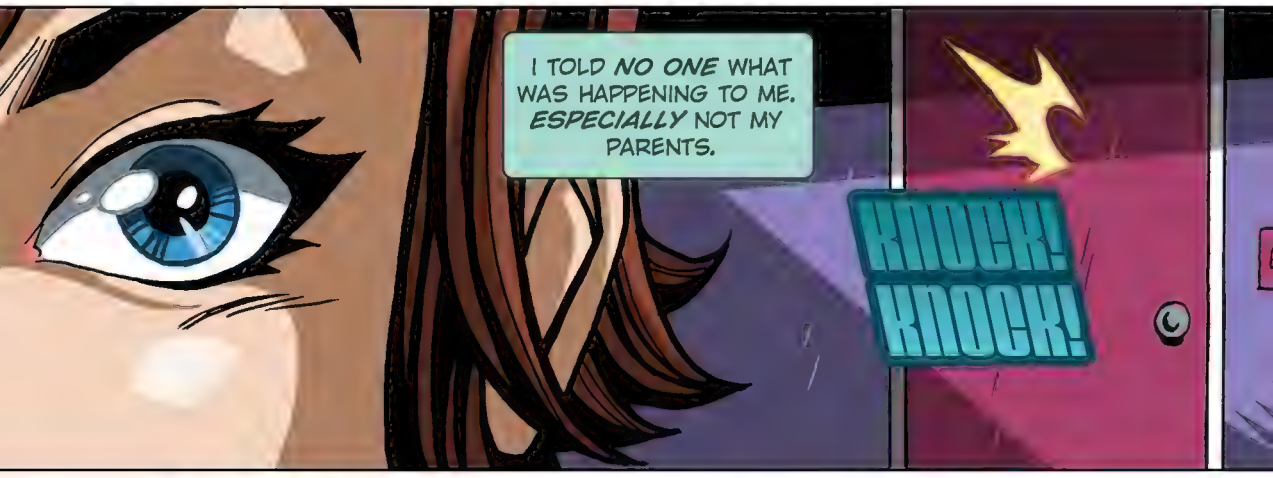
LOOK, I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE I AM OR WHO YOU ARE. ALL I CARE ABOUT IS GETTING BACK TO EARTH.
IF YOU CAN HELP ME DO THAT, I'LL TELL YOU WHATEVER YOU WANT.
SO TELL ME... JUST WHY SHOULD I TRUST YOU?


YOU ARE IN NO POSITION TO DICTATE TERMS! ONLY AFTER YOU HAVE ANSWERED OUR QUESTIONS TO OUR SATISFACTION WILL THERE BE ANY FURTHER DISCUSSION AS TO YOUR CURRENT LOCATION AND FUTURE DESTINATION.
NOW, PLEASE BEGIN YOUR TESTIMONY, PROVIDING APPROPRIATE CONTEXT- THE CIRCUMSTANCES, THE PLAYERS INVOLVED.

BETTER GET COMFORTABLE. THIS COULD TAKE A WHILE.

IT ALL SORT OF STARTED WHEN I WAS *16.* IT BEGAN WITH DREAMS THEN QUICKLY TRANSITIONED TO WAKING VISIONS. I WOULD SEE... ***HEAR*** THINGS. ***DARK*** THINGS. VOICES. ***FACES.***
ALTHOUGH ***"VISIONS"*** MAY BE TOO TAME FOR WHAT I EXPERIENCED. I THOUGHT I WAS GOING CRAZY, OR ***WORSE.***
I WAS AFRAID... ***ASHAMED*** OF WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO ME, YET ***SOMETHING*** COMPELLED ME TO RECORD IT ALL.

I WAS GIVEN WORDS... A LANGUAGE I COULDN'T COMPREHEND.

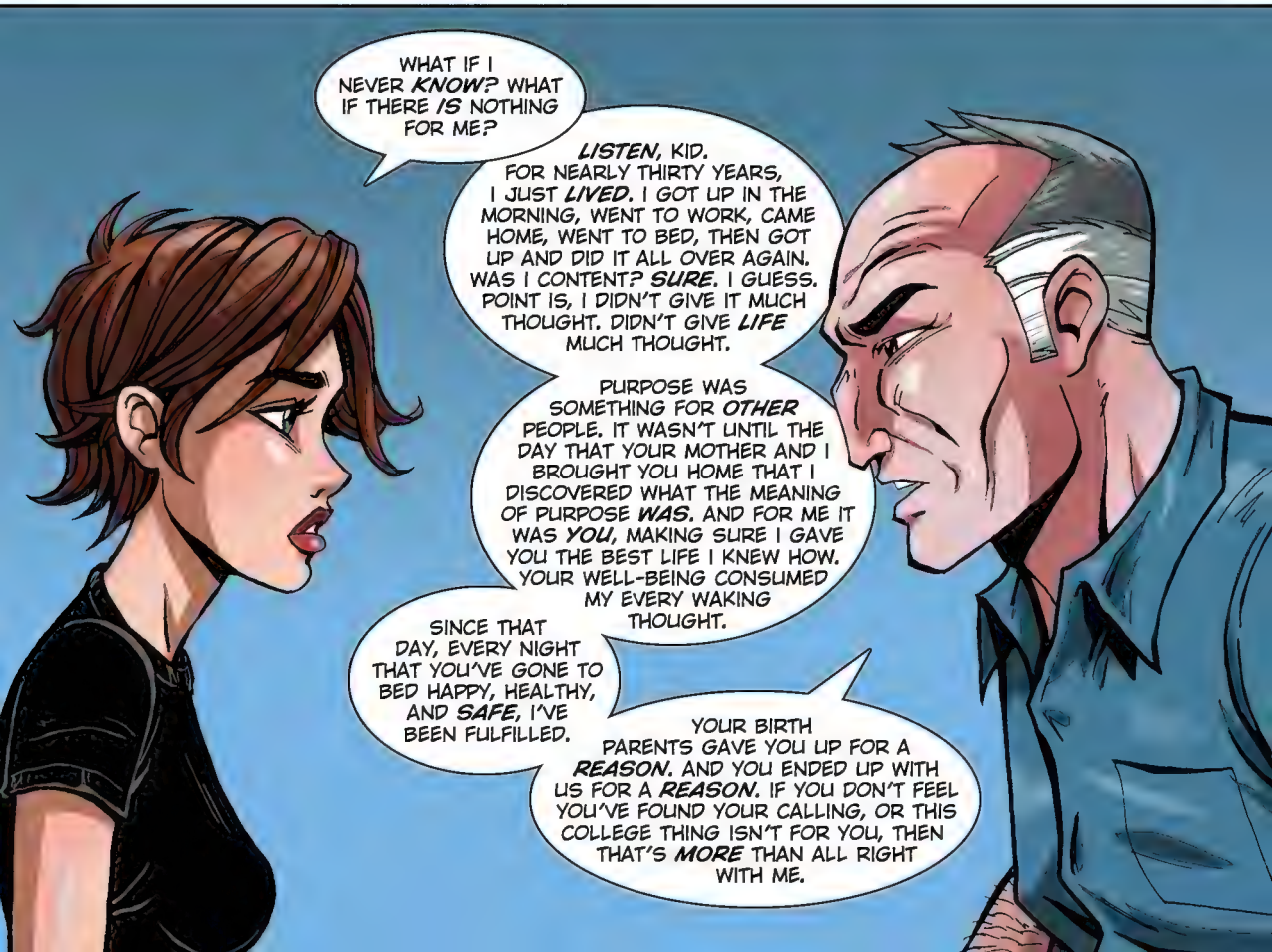

I TOLD NO ONE WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO ME. ESPECIALLY NOT MY PARENTS.
KNOCK! KNOCK!

HEY, KIDDO!
DAD!

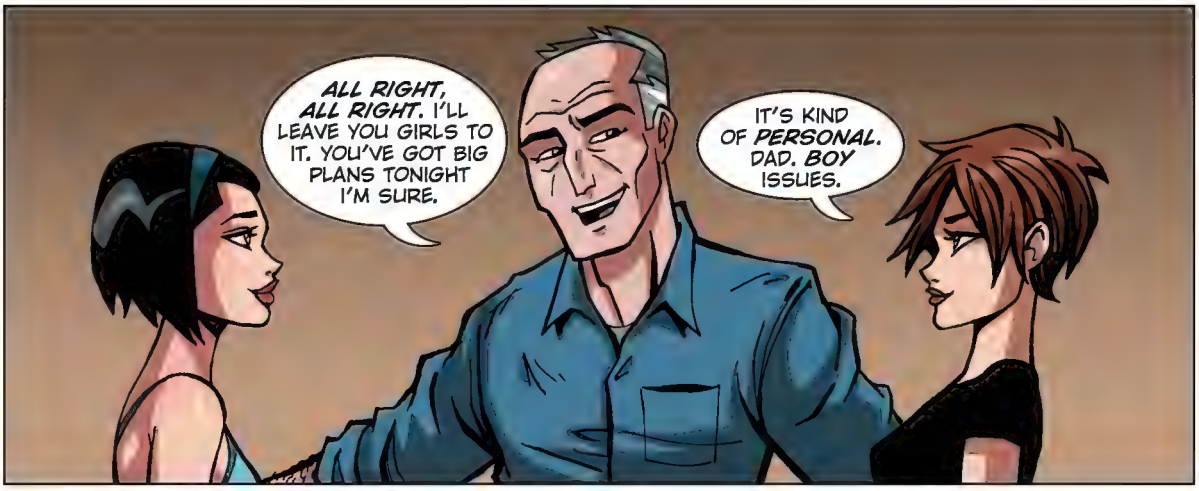
YOUR FATHER?
JONATHAN KILDAY. THE MAN WHO RAISED ME. THE MAN I CALLED FATHER.

BUT HE WASN'T MY BIOLOGICAL FATHER, IF THAT'S WHAT YOU'RE ASKING.
WHO WAS HE?
JAMES FREEHORN. BUT I'D RATHER NOT TALK ABOUT HIM.
AND HER?
SARA RADDEMER. MY MOTHER. I... NEVER KNEW HER. BUT SHE GAVE ME UP TO PROTECT ME.
CONTINUE
YOU OKAY, SWEETHEART?
YEAH, YEAH, JUST, UH...
YOU CAN'T HIDE ANYTHING FROM ME. I THINK I KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON HERE.
YOU DO?
SURE. I WENT THROUGH THE SAME THING WHEN I WAS YOUR AGE. GRADUATION. COLLEGE.
YOUR FRIENDS ARE PULLING YOU ONE WAY, YOUR PARENTS ANOTHER. THEN THERE'RE YOUR TEACHERS, COUNSELORS.
IT'S ENOUGH TO DRIVE ANYONE CRAZY.

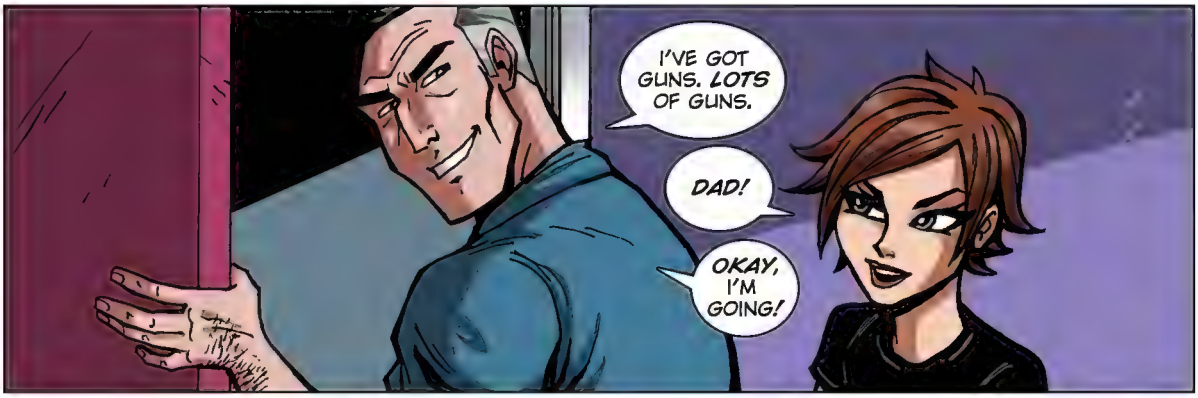
YEAH, PRETTY MUCH!
YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN MAKE THESE DECISIONS. YES, YOUR MOTHER AND I LOVE YOU AND WANT THE BEST FOR YOU.
BUT THIS IS YOUR LIFE. THESE ARE CHOICES YOU HAVE TO MAKE. JUST KNOW THAT WHATEVER YOU DECIDE, WE'LL SUPPORT YOU.
I KNOW, IT'S JUST... DON'T MOST KIDS LOOK AHEAD AND SEE THEMSELVES AS DOCTORS OR LAWYERS OR MUSICIANS?
I LOOK AHEAD AND SEE... NOTHING. I'M NOT LOOKING TO SAVE THE WORLD OR ANYTHING.
I JUST WANT...
DIARY OF


WHAT IF I NEVER KNOW? WHAT IF THERE IS NOTHING FOR ME?
LISTEN, KID. FOR NEARLY THIRTY YEARS, I JUST LIVED. I GOT UP IN THE MORNING, WENT TO WORK, CAME HOME, WENT TO BED, THEN GOT UP AND DID IT ALL OVER AGAIN. WAS I CONTENT? SURE. I GUESS. POINT IS, I DIDN'T GIVE IT MUCH THOUGHT. DIDN'T GIVE LIFE MUCH THOUGHT.
PURPOSE WAS SOMETHING FOR OTHER PEOPLE. IT WASN'T UNTIL THE DAY THAT YOUR MOTHER AND I BROUGHT YOU HOME THAT I DISCOVERED WHAT THE MEANING OF PURPOSE WAS. AND FOR ME IT WAS YOU, MAKING SURE I GAVE YOU THE BEST LIFE I KNEW HOW. YOUR WELL-BEING CONSUMED MY EVERY WAKING THOUGHT.
SINCE THAT DAY, EVERY NIGHT THAT YOU'VE GONE TO BED HAPPY, HEALTHY, AND SAFE, I'VE BEEN FULFILLED.
YOUR BIRTH PARENTS GAVE YOU UP FOR A REASON. AND YOU ENDED UP WITH US FOR A REASON. IF YOU DON'T FEEL YOU'VE FOUND YOUR CALLING, OR THIS COLLEGE THING ISN'T FOR YOU, THEN THAT'S MORE THAN ALL RIGHT WITH ME.

IF THERE'S ONE THING I'M CERTAIN ABOUT, IT'S THAT THERE'S SOMETHING SPECIAL IN STORE FOR YOU, NARA KILDAY.
WHENEVER AND WHATEVER THAT MAY BE, YOU'LL KNOW WHEN IT HAPPENS.
I'M NOT INTERRUPTING, AM I?
AND THIS IS?
HAZY FOSS. SHE... SHE WAS MY BEST FRIEND.
HOW'S THE FAMILY? TREATING YOU WELL?
MOM IS... MOM. AND SIMON, WELL, TO BE HONEST, I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM MUCH LATELY. REALLY WRAPPED UP IN COLLEGE, I GUESS.
WHAT ABOUT THAT PROFESSOR'S BODY THEY FOUND BY THE LAKE? THE ONE MISSING HIS HEAD? CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT?
DAD!

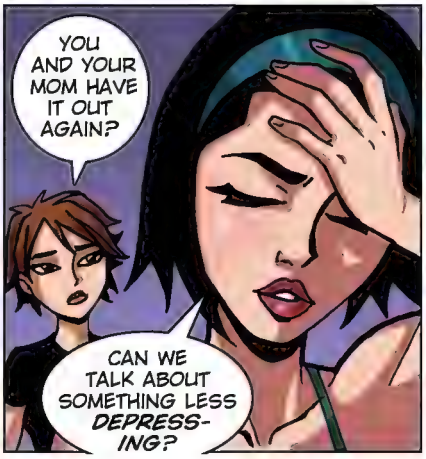

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT. I'LL LEAVE YOU GIRLS TO IT. YOU'VE GOT BIG PLANS TONIGHT I'M SURE.
IT'S KIND OF PERSONAL. DAD. BOY ISSUES.

YOU NEED ME TO PUT THE FEAR OF GOD IN SOME YOUNG PUNK?
NO, DAD! WE'VE GOT IT UNDER CONTROL, OKAY?


I'VE GOT GUNS. LOTS OF GUNS.
DAD!
OKAY, I'M GOING!

SORRY ABOUT THAT!

DON'T BE. YOU DON'T KNOW HOW GOOD YOU HAVE IT, HAVING SOMEONE WHO CARES LIKE THAT.


YOU AND YOUR MOM HAVE IT OUT AGAIN?
CAN WE TALK ABOUT SOMETHING LESS DEPRESS-ING?

HOW IS YOUR AND PATRICK'S DYSFUNCTIONAL ON-AGAIN, OFF-AGAIN RELATIONSHIP ANY LESS DEPRESSING?
WHAT AM I GOING TO DO, NARA?
YOU KNOW MY ANSWER.
IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE. WE HAVE... A HISTORY TOGETHER.
IT IS THAT SIMPLE. JUST STOP LETTING YOURSELF FALL FOR HIS B.S. SWEET TALK AND STICK TO YOUR GUNS. HE'LL NEVER RESPECT YOU AS LONG AS YOU LET HIM WALK ALL OVER YOU.
BUT-
NO BUTS! YOU GUYS MAKE EACH OTHER MISERABLE. YOU WERE HAPPY FOR ABOUT A WEEK AND IT'S DONE NOTHING BUT GO DOWNHILL EVER SINCE. YOU DESERVE BETTER, HAZY.
WHY DO YOU ALWAYS FEEL THE NEED TO COME TO MY RESCUE?
BECAUSE I CARE ABOUT YOU, STUPID. MAYBE IT'S MY CALLING. GOD KNOWS IT'S A FULL TIME JOB.
VERY FUNNY. SORRY NOT ALL OF US ARE LUCKY ENOUGH TO HAVE THE PICTURE PERFECT LIFE LIKE YOU.
I'M SORRY. THAT CAME OUT WRONG.
YOU REALLY THINK I HAVE A PERFECT LIFE?

NARA, I'M SORRY. I DIDN'T MEAN IT LIKE THAT.
I KNOW. IT'S OKAY. NOW, WE'RE GOING TO PATRICK'S AND YOU'RE GOING TO TELL HIM LIKE IT IS, AND I'M GOING TO BE THERE TO BACK YOU UP.
SO GET OFF YOUR BUTT AND LET'S GO DO THIS. WE'RE NOT GOING TO LIVE FOREVER.
WE FAIL TO SEE THE RELEVANCE IN THIS.
I WAS JUST... REMEMBERING.
THOSE WERE THE LAST MOMENTS BEFORE EVERYTHING CHANGED. THAT WAS THE NIGHT I DIED.

EARTH.
ZACHARY PITCH RE-ELECTED IN HISTORIC LANDSLIDE
HATE GROUP GAINS STRENGTH
CRISIS IN MERICA
OUR DYING PLANET
JOIN THE COMMUNITY. GET MARKED TODAY!
PUBLIC MARKING CEREMONY
ANTI-MARKED TERRORIST LEADER STILL AT LARGE
Manhunt continues for Bree Strauss
MARKED for Greatness.
1 Race.
1 Religion.
1 World.
UNITY is our DESTINY

THE SOLAR SYSTEM
THE SOLAR SYSTEM
THE SOLAR SYSTEM
STARS & PL
the stars are falling
it is time

...WE ACTIVATED THE KEY, BUT *LILITH* INTERFERED. I WAS *SEPARATED* FROM MY BODY. THAT'S THE LAST THING I REMEMBER BEFORE WAKING UP HERE.
THAT'S IT. I'VE TOLD YOU *EVERYTHING*. YOU SAW IT ALL FOR YOURSELF. NOW HOW ABOUT YOU HOLD UP *YOUR* END OF THE DEAL AND TELL ME JUST WHERE THE HELL AM I?

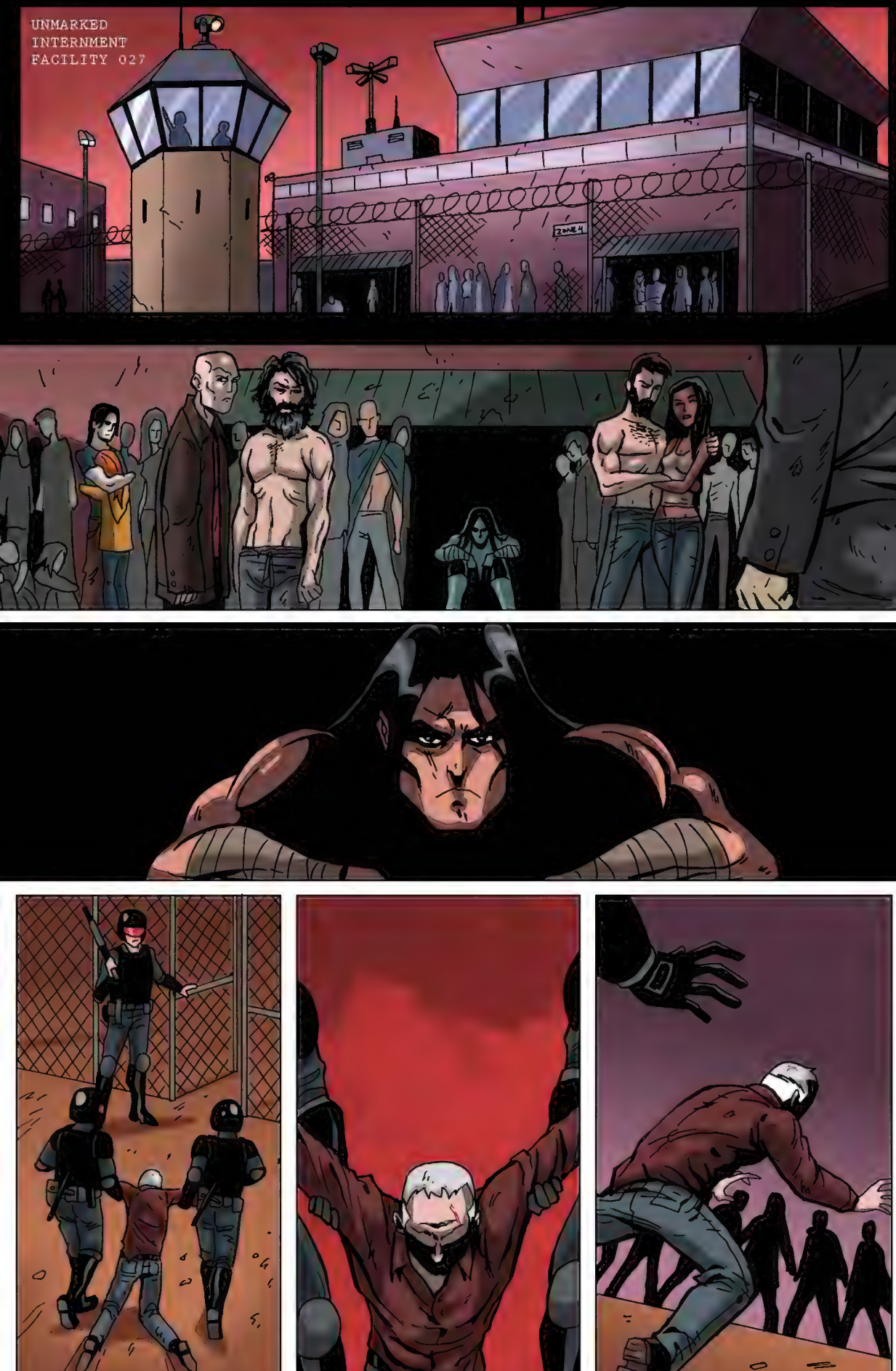
VERY WELL...

I AM CAPTAIN SH'AEL. YOU ARE ON BOARD THE EMPYREAN SPIRIT VESSEL EQUINOX.
THE EQUINOX IS A STAR-POWERED, TRANS-DIMENSIONAL SOUL COURIER. YOU MAY BE MORE FAMILIAR WITH THE TERMS "CHARIOT" OR "UFO."
THE SO-CALLED WHITE LIGHT AT THE END OF THE TUNNEL? THAT'S US. UPON DEATH, IT'S OUR TASK TO GET SOULS TO THEIR PROPER DESTINATION.
OUR MOST RECENT MISSION WAS COLLECTING ALL ENTITIES FROM THE DEBRIS FIELD OF THE PURGATOR SYSTEM.
HOWEVER, WE FOUND TWO WE WERE NOT EXPECTING.

TWO? WAIT, YOU MEAN ASIA IS HERE, TOO? CAN I SEE HER?
SHE'S CARRYING A 9TH LEVEL BLOOD CURSE. SHE'S BEEN QUARANTINED FOR THE SAFETY OF EVERY-ONE ON BOARD.
IDEALLY, WE WOULD DELIVER YOU BOTH TO AN ARCH SHIP AND THEY WOULD FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO WITH YOU.
UNFORTUNATELY, WE ARE ON AN URGENT MISSION TO EARTH AND DON'T HAVE THAT LUXURY. YOU WILL REMAIN HERE UNTIL OUR MISSION IS COMPLETE.
BUT EARTH IS WHERE I NEED TO BE! CAN'T YOU JUST DROP ME OFF OR BEAM ME DOWN OR SOMETHING?
THAT WON'T BE POSSIBLE. EARTH HAS FALLEN. WE HAVE REACHED OMEGA POINT - THE GREAT GATHERING. WE WILL BE CROSSING ENEMY LINES TO REACH THE EXTRACTION PLANE.
NORMALLY WE WOULDN'T HAVE TO GET SO CLOSE, BUT WITH THE RECENT DESTRUCTION OF THE TETHER, SOULS HAVE NO WAY OUT UNLESS WE ARE THERE TO COLLECT THEM MANUALLY.
THEN WHAT'S THE PROBLEM? JUST GET ME OFF THE SHIP! I'LL TAKE THE RISK!
YOU DON'T GET IT. YOUR SOUL HAS BEEN SEPARATED FROM YOUR BODY. THAT MEANS YOU'RE DEAD. AND PERFORMING A RESURRECTION IS WAY BEYOND MY AUTHORITY. YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE.
AS GEMINI OF ZODIAC, I'M GIVING YOU THE AUTHORITY! I HAVE TO GET BACK! MEL NEEDS ME!
THE GREAT MELCHIZEDEK CAN TAKE CARE OF HIMSELF. AND WHATEVER AUTHORITY YOU THINK YOU HAVE IS NOT RECOGNIZED ABOARD THIS SHIP.
YOUR ROLE IN THIS STORY IS OVER. YOU MAY HAVE CHEATED DEATH TWICE BEFORE, BUT THERE WILL BE NO THIRD RESURRECTION FOR NARA KILDAY.

FALLING STAR
CATCH A FALLING STAR

EARTH
CHAPTER 2
WE ARE THE FUTURE
THE UNMARKED ARE
NØ MARK = NØ PEACE!
TERRORISTS!
THE NAME
F PROGRESS.
JOIN THE HUMAN COMMUNITY.
GET MARKED TODAY.
IN THE HUMAN COMMUNITY.
ET MARKED
IN THE NAME OF PROGRESS
UNITY

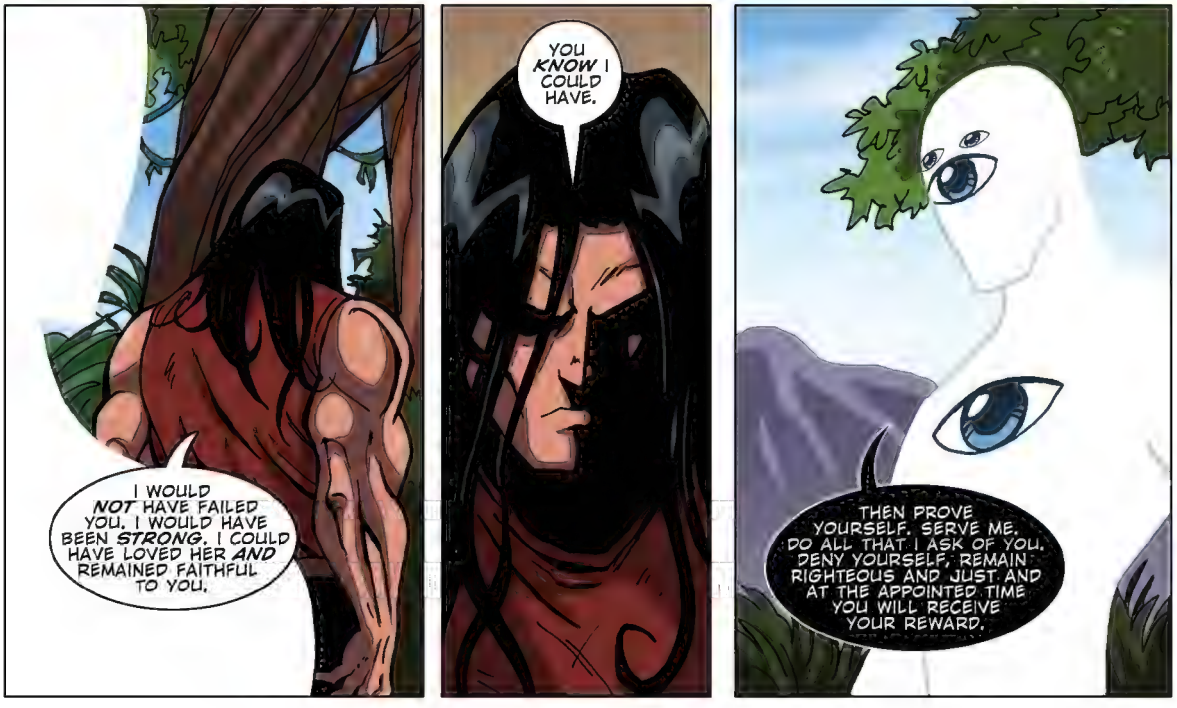

UNMARKED
INTERNMENT
FACILITY 027
ZONE 4

GET HIM SOME WATER!
KYLE, BEN. HOW YOU GUYS HOLDING UP?
JUST PLEASE TELL US YOU HAVE SOME GOOD NEWS.
SPREAD THE WORD. IT'S ON. EVERYTHING'S SET.
THE GO WORD IS "WAR."

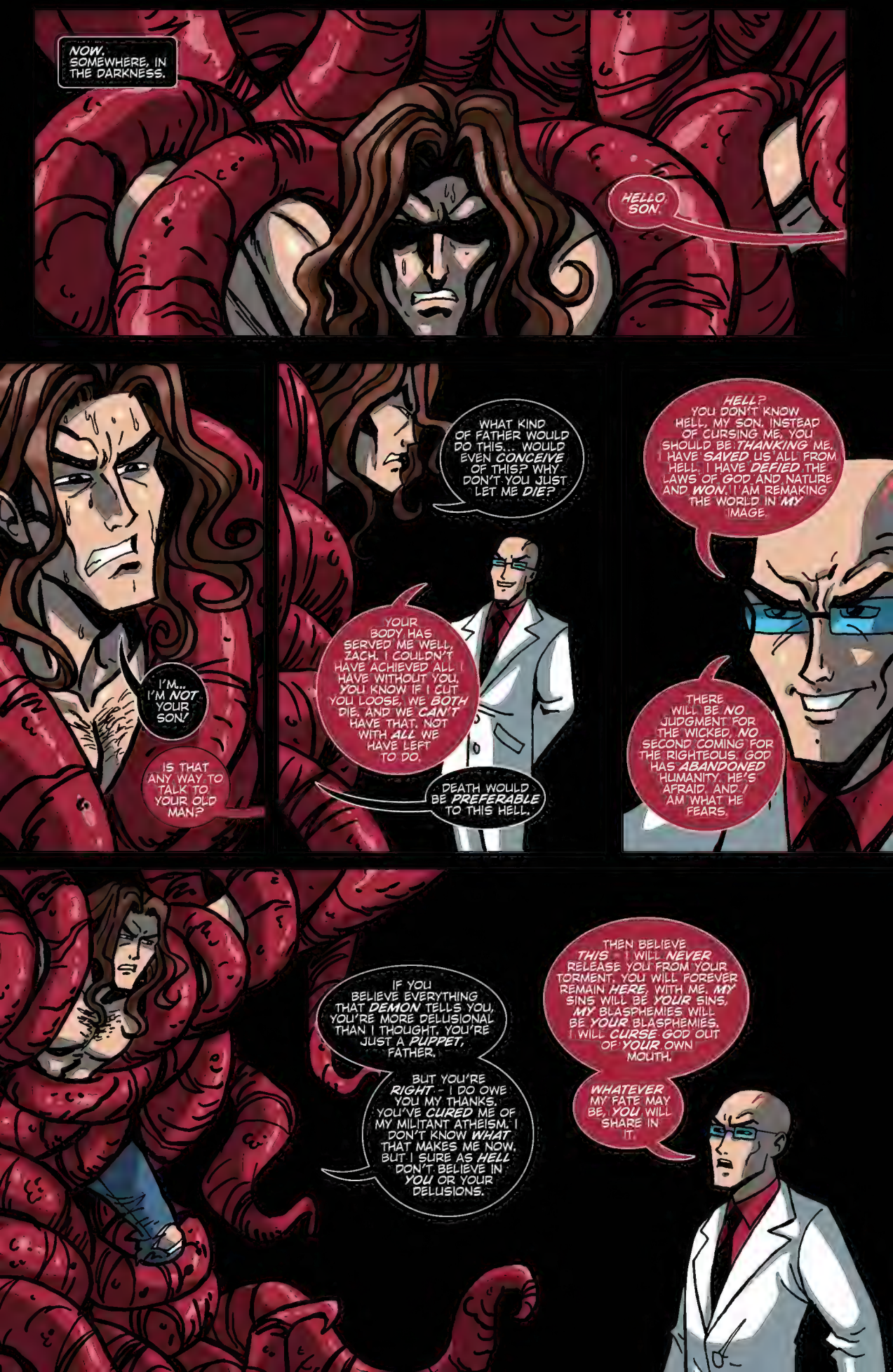
ADAM HAS FAILED.
I KNOW.
SO WHAT HAPPENS NOW?
DEATH.

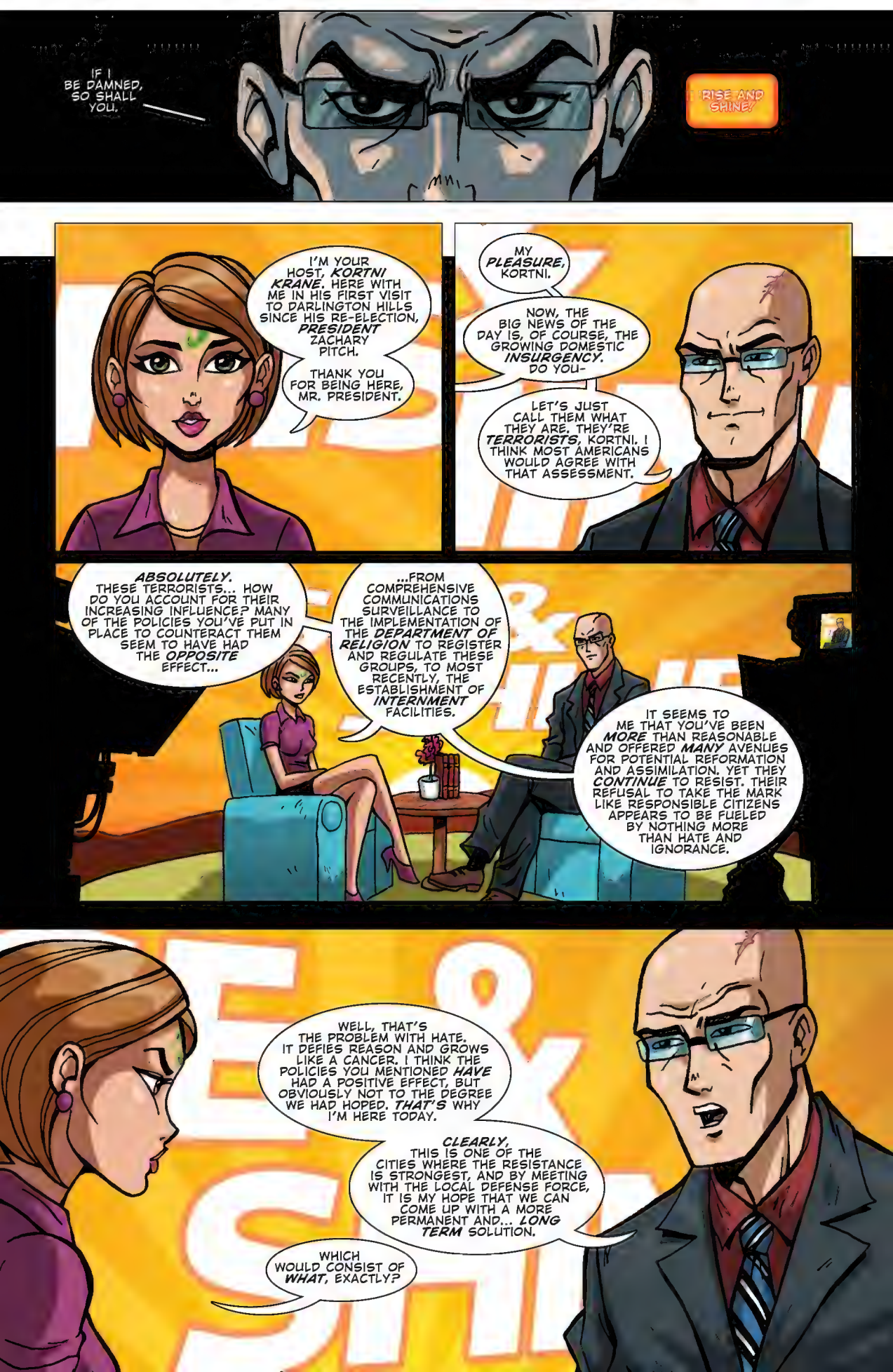
AND WHAT OF YOUR PLANS FOR ME?
YOUR FATE WAS SEALED WITH ADAM'S CHOICE. *MUCH* WILL I ASK OF YOU.
IT'S NOT FAIR.
NO. BUT YOU WERE *PREPARED* FOR THIS.
ADAM... HE DIDN'T *DESERVE* HER.
THAT IS NOT FOR YOU TO DECIDE.

I SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE ONE!
THEY WILL BOTH SUFFER FOR THEIR REBELLION. THEY WILL KNOW PAIN AND LOSS. THEIR TRANSGRESSION WILL SPREAD TO THEIR CHILDREN, THEIR CHILDREN'S CHILDREN, AND ON UNTIL THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.
AND THOUGH YOU WILL NOT SHARE IN THE CONSEQUENCE OF THEIR SIN, YOU WILL KNOW PAIN OF A *DIFFERENT* SORT. YOU MUST NEVER TAKE A WIFE NOR FATHER CHILDREN. YOUR PATH WILL BE NARROW. SIN MUST *NEVER* BE ALLOWED TO TAKE ROOT IN YOUR HEART.
AND WHILE DEATH MAY CLAIM YOU, YOU WILL LIVE AND BE REBORN UNTIL THE END OF AGES.

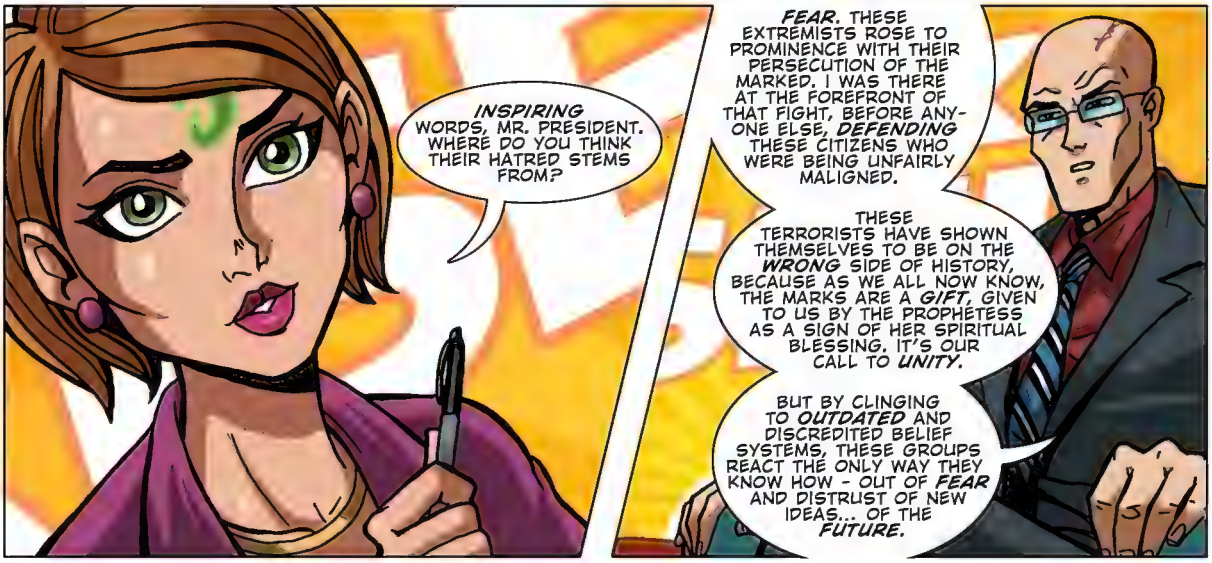

I WOULD *NOT* HAVE FAILED YOU. I WOULD HAVE BEEN *STRONG*. I COULD HAVE LOVED HER *AND* REMAINED FAITHFUL TO YOU.
YOU *KNOW* I COULD HAVE.
THEN PROVE YOURSELF. SERVE ME. DO ALL THAT I ASK OF YOU. DENY YOURSELF, REMAIN RIGHTEOUS AND JUST AND AT THE APPOINTED TIME YOU WILL RECEIVE YOUR REWARD.

WHAT MUST I DO?
I HAVE WRITTEN MANKIND'S FUTURE AMONGST THE STARS. BEGIN THERE.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
YOU WILL. FOR NOW, I MUST GO.
NO!
I CANNOT REMAIN HERE. BUT I WILL NEVER BE FAR FROM YOU.


NOW. SOMEWHERE, IN THE DARKNESS.
HELLO, SON.
I'M... I'M NOT YOUR SON!
IS THAT ANY WAY TO TALK TO YOUR OLD MAN?
WHAT KIND OF FATHER WOULD DO THIS... WOULD EVEN CONCEIVE OF THIS? WHY DON'T YOU JUST LET ME DIE?
YOUR BODY HAS SERVED ME WELL, ZACH. I COULDN'T HAVE ACHIEVED ALL I HAVE WITHOUT YOU. YOU KNOW IF I CUT YOU LOOSE, WE BOTH DIE, AND WE CAN'T HAVE THAT. NOT WITH ALL WE HAVE LEFT TO DO.
DEATH WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO THIS HELL.
HELL? YOU DON'T KNOW HELL, MY SON. INSTEAD OF CURSING ME, YOU SHOULD BE THANKING ME. I HAVE SAVED US ALL FROM HELL. I HAVE DEFIED THE LAWS OF GOD AND NATURE AND WON. I AM REMAKING THE WORLD IN MY IMAGE.
THERE WILL BE NO JUDGMENT FOR THE WICKED, NO SECOND COMING FOR THE RIGHTEOUS. GOD HAS ABANDONED HUMANITY. HE'S AFRAID. AND I AM WHAT HE FEARS.
IF YOU BELIEVE EVERYTHING THAT DEMON TELLS YOU, YOU'RE MORE DELUSIONAL THAN I THOUGHT. YOU'RE JUST A PUPPET, FATHER.
BUT YOU'RE RIGHT - I DO OWE YOU MY THANKS. YOU'VE CURED ME OF MY MILITANT ATHEISM. I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT MAKES ME NOW, BUT I SURE AS HELL DON'T BELIEVE IN YOU OR YOUR DELUSIONS.
THEN BELIEVE THIS - I WILL NEVER RELEASE YOU FROM YOUR TORMENT. YOU WILL FOREVER REMAIN HERE, MY SINS WILL BE YOUR SINS, MY BLASPHEMIES WILL BE YOUR BLASPHEMIES. I WILL CURSE GOD OUT OF YOUR OWN MOUTH.
WHATEVER MY FATE MAY BE, YOU WILL SHARE IN IT.


IF I BE DAMNED, SO SHALL YOU.
RISE AND SHINE!
I'M YOUR HOST, KORTNI KRANE. HERE WITH ME IN HIS FIRST VISIT TO DARLINGTON HILLS SINCE HIS RE-ELECTION, PRESIDENT ZACHARY PITCH.
THANK YOU FOR BEING HERE, MR. PRESIDENT.
MY PLEASURE, KORTNI.
NOW, THE BIG NEWS OF THE DAY IS, OF COURSE, THE GROWING DOMESTIC INSURGENCY. DO YOU-
LET'S JUST CALL THEM WHAT THEY ARE. THEY'RE TERRORISTS, KORTNI. I THINK MOST AMERICANS WOULD AGREE WITH THAT ASSESSMENT.
ABSOLUTELY. THESE TERRORISTS... HOW DO YOU ACCOUNT FOR THEIR INCREASING INFLUENCE? MANY OF THE POLICIES YOU'VE PUT IN PLACE TO COUNTERACT THEM SEEM TO HAVE HAD THE OPPOSITE EFFECT...
...FROM COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATIONS SURVEILLANCE TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION TO REGISTER AND REGULATE THESE GROUPS, TO MOST RECENTLY, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF INTERNMENT FACILITIES.
IT SEEMS TO ME THAT YOU'VE BEEN MORE THAN REASONABLE AND OFFERED MANY AVENUES FOR POTENTIAL REFORMATION AND ASSIMILATION. YET THEY CONTINUE TO RESIST. THEIR REFUSAL TO TAKE THE MARK LIKE RESPONSIBLE CITIZENS APPEARS TO BE FUELED BY NOTHING MORE THAN HATE AND IGNORANCE.
WELL, THAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH HATE. IT DEFIES REASON AND GROWS LIKE A CANCER. I THINK THE POLICIES YOU MENTIONED HAVE HAD A POSITIVE EFFECT, BUT OBVIOUSLY NOT TO THE DEGREE WE HAD HOPED. THAT'S WHY I'M HERE TODAY.
CLEARLY, THIS IS ONE OF THE CITIES WHERE THE RESISTANCE IS STRONGEST, AND BY MEETING WITH THE LOCAL DEFENSE FORCE, IT IS MY HOPE THAT WE CAN COME UP WITH A MORE PERMANENT AND... LONG TERM SOLUTION.
WHICH WOULD CONSIST OF WHAT, EXACTLY?

WELL, THAT WILL BE DECIDED IN THE COMING DAYS. BUT LET ME BE CLEAR - THESE RADICALS POSE A TRUE DANGER TO OUR DEMOCRACY AND THREATEN TO UNDERMINE ALL THE PROGRESS AND EQUALITY WE'RE TRYING TO ACHIEVE.
THE HUMAN RACE WILL NEVER EVOLVE IF WE DON'T DEAL WITH THIS PROBLEM SWIFTLY AND DECISIVELY.


INSPIRING WORDS, MR. PRESIDENT. WHERE DO YOU THINK THEIR HATRED STEMS FROM?
FEAR. THESE EXTREMISTS ROSE TO PROMINENCE WITH THEIR PERSECUTION OF THE MARKED. I WAS THERE AT THE FOREFRONT OF THAT FIGHT, BEFORE ANYONE ELSE, DEFENDING THESE CITIZENS WHO WERE BEING UNFAIRLY MALIGNED.
THESE TERRORISTS HAVE SHOWN THEMSELVES TO BE ON THE WRONG SIDE OF HISTORY, BECAUSE AS WE ALL NOW KNOW, THE MARKS ARE A GIFT, GIVEN TO US BY THE PROPHETESS AS A SIGN OF HER SPIRITUAL BLESSING. IT'S OUR CALL TO UNITY.
BUT BY CLINGING TO OUTDATED AND DISCREDITED BELIEF SYSTEMS, THESE GROUPS REACT THE ONLY WAY THEY KNOW HOW - OUT OF FEAR AND DISTRUST OF NEW IDEAS... OF THE FUTURE.

YOU HAVE BEEN SLANDERED WITH SOME OF THE MOST OUTRAGEOUS ACCUSATIONS - EVERYTHING FROM COMMUNIST TO NAZI TO ANTI-CHRIST.
SOME OF THE MORE DISTURBING COMMENTS SEEM TO INDICATE A BELIEF THAT YOU'RE POSSESSED BY DEMONS OR THAT YOUR DEAD FATHER IS SOMEHOW INFLUENCING YOU FROM BEYOND THE GRAVE. HOW DO YOU RESPOND?

I THINK YOU LEFT OUT VAMPIRE AND SPACE ALIEN, KORTNI. I HEARD THOSE JUST THE OTHER DAY.
OH, MY GOODNESS!
ARE YOU HEARING THIS?

SMUG BASTARD. LOOK AT THE WAY HE JUST LAUGHS IT OFF. AND SHE SITS THERE AND EATS IT UP.

THEN LET'S WIPE THE GRIN OFF HIS GOD DAMNED FACE.

DANIEL. WE READY?
JUST GIVE THE WORD, BOSS.
ALERT ALL TEAMS. LET'S DO IT.

HELLO, FRIEND. THE OTHERS HAVE BEEN FILLING ME IN. THEY SAY YOU DON'T TALK MUCH. BUT I KNOW IF YOU'RE IN HERE, YOU'RE NO FRIEND OF THIS REGIME.
NAME'S *KILDAY*. JONATHAN KILDAY.
WELL, *ANYWAY*... SOMETHING *BIG* IS ABOUT TO GO DOWN AND WE COULD SURE USE YOUR MUSCLE. IF WE DON'T GET OUT OF HERE SOON, THEY'RE GOING TO DRAG US ALL BEFORE THAT UNHOLY BITCH AND *THEN*... WELL I THINK YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENS THEN. JUST BE READY.

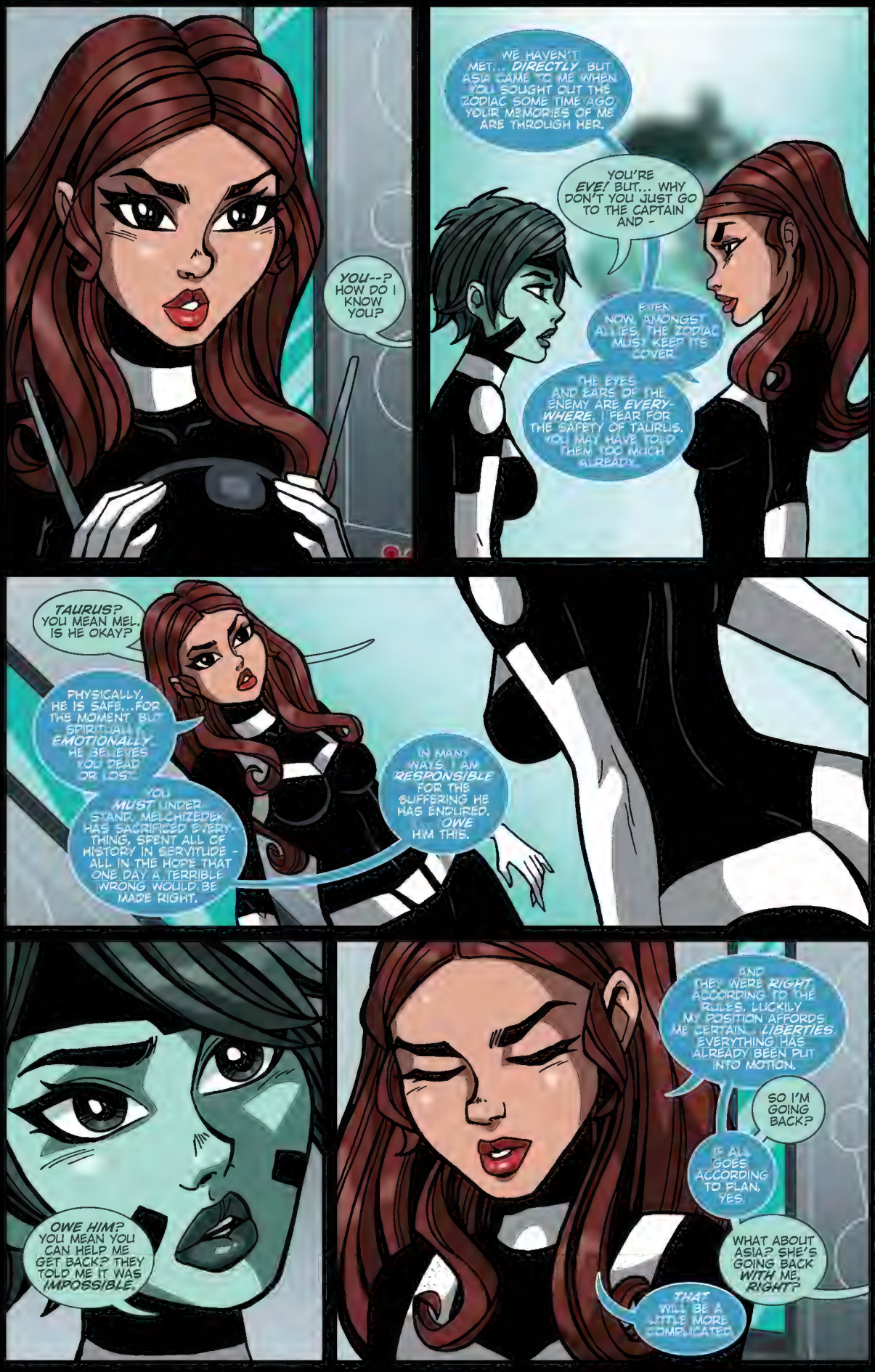
THE EQUINOX.
ABOUT TIME! I NEED TO SPEAK TO YOUR CAPTAIN. NOW!
YOU'RE IN LUCK, CAPTAIN SHAEL HAS ASKED TO SEE YOU FOR FURTHER QUESTIONING.

FURTHER QUESTIONING? YOU GUYS ALREADY HAD A PROBE IN MY BRAIN, WHAT ELSE COULD YOU POSSIBLY-
QUIET!
IS THAT... EARTH? ARE WE REALLY THAT CLOSE?
KEEP MOVING!
WAIT!
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO IT? IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S... DYING.
WE ARE NEARING THE END THE NATURAL CULMINATION OF THE SIN THAT BEGAN WITH ADAM AND CONTINUES TO THIS DAY. BUT MAN IS BLINDED TO IT, CONTINUALLY LOOKING FOR OUTWARD CAUSES TO HIS PROBLEMS, NEVER LOOKING INWARD AT THE CONDITION OF HIS OWN HEART.
NOT THAT IT MATTERS NOW. THIS PLANET DOESN'T HAVE MUCH LONGER.

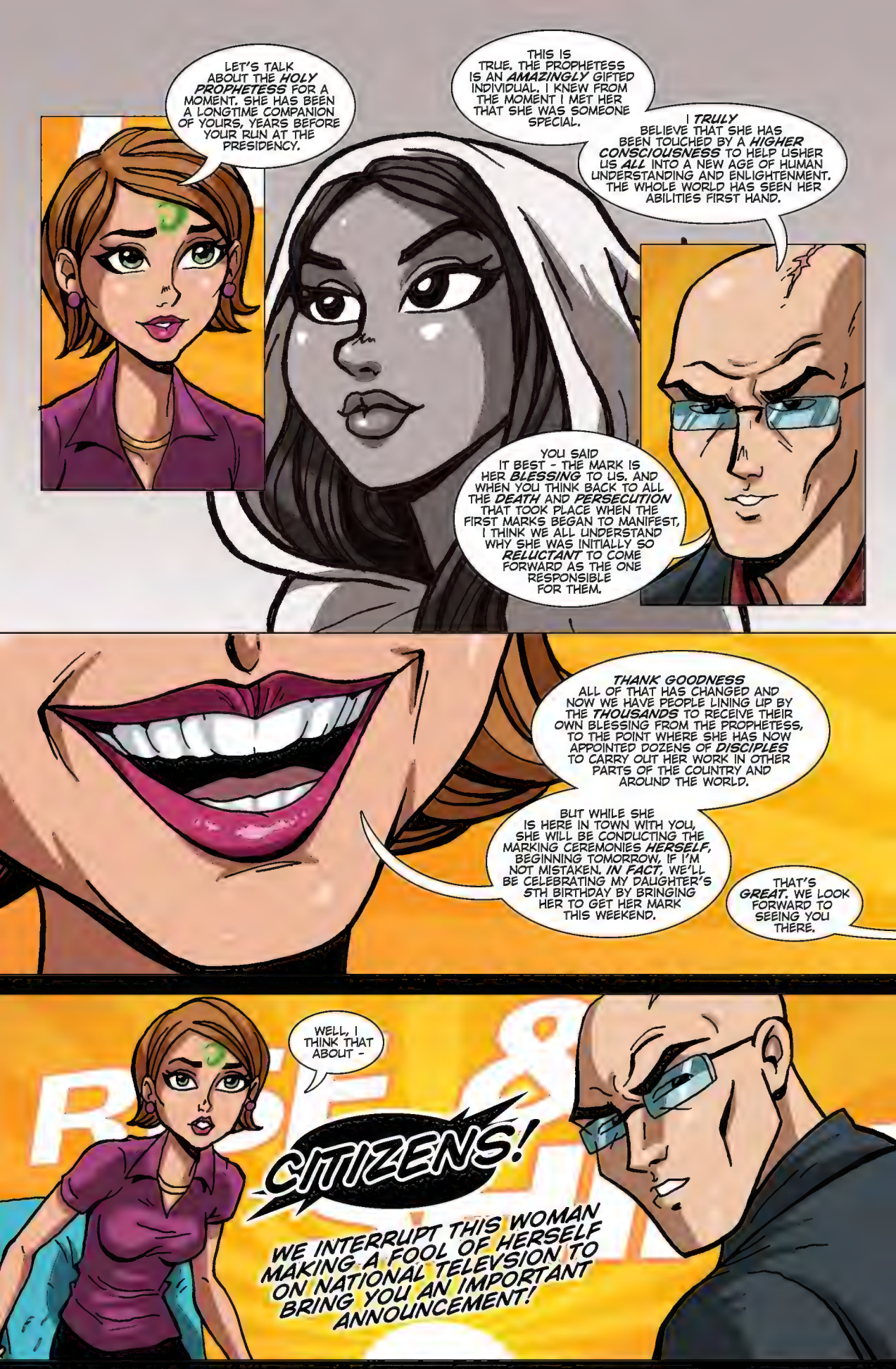
THE SPECIES OF THE HEAVENS ARE JUST AS VARIED AS THOSE ON EARTH. MORE SO, IN FACT. SURELY YOU'VE SEEN ENOUGH BY NOW TO KNOW THAT WE AREN'T ALL FEATHERED WINGS AND WHITE ROBES
SURE. BUT AN OX-MAN IN THEORY AND AN OX-MAN IN PERSON ARE TWO COMPLETELY DIFFERENT THINGS.
QUIET!
AAAAHH!
THERE! YOU WON'T HAVE TO HEAR HER ANY MORE.
ZZZT!

FOLLOW ME. WE DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME.
WAIT! WHO ARE YOU?
HALT. RESTRICTED AREA. AUTHORIZED ACCESS ONLY.
AUTHORIZATION: AQUARIUS
ACCESS GRANTED.

OH, MY GOD...
...ASIA!
THEY'RE KEEPING HER QUARANTINED HERE IN STASIS BECAUSE OF HER INFECTION. THEY CALL IT A BLOOD CURSE. BUT IT RUNS *MUCH* DEEPER THAN THAT.
I BROUGHT YOU HERE SO THAT YOU COULD SEE HER, *AND* SO THAT WE COULD TALK.
SO JUST *WHO* ARE YOU?
AN ALLY.


YOU--? HOW DO I KNOW YOU?
WE HAVEN'T MET... DIRECTLY. BUT ASIA CAME TO ME WHEN YOU SOUGHT OUT THE ZODIAC SOME TIME AGO. YOUR MEMORIES OF ME ARE THROUGH HER.
YOU'RE EVE! BUT... WHY DON'T YOU JUST GO TO THE CAPTAIN AND -
EVEN NOW, AMONGST ALLIES, THE ZODIAC MUST KEEP ITS COVER.
THE EYES AND EARS OF THE ENEMY ARE EVERYWHERE. I FEAR FOR THE SAFETY OF TAURUS. YOU MAY HAVE TOLD THEM TOO MUCH ALREADY.
TAURUS? YOU MEAN MEL. IS HE OKAY?
PHYSICALLY, HE IS SAFE...FOR THE MOMENT. BUT SPIRITUALLY. EMOTIONALLY. HE BELIEVES YOU DEAD OR LOST.
YOU MUST UNDERSTAND. MELCHIZEDEK HAS SACRIFICED EVERYTHING, SPENT ALL OF HISTORY IN SERVITUDE - ALL IN THE HOPE THAT ONE DAY A TERRIBLE WRONG WOULD BE MADE RIGHT.
IN MANY WAYS, I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUFFERING HE HAS ENDURED. I OWE HIM THIS.
OWE HIM? YOU MEAN YOU CAN HELP ME GET BACK? THEY TOLD ME IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE.
AND THEY WERE RIGHT, ACCORDING TO THE RULES. LUCKILY, MY POSITION AFFORDS ME CERTAIN... LIBERTIES. EVERYTHING HAS ALREADY BEEN PUT INTO MOTION.
SO I'M GOING BACK?
IF ALL GOES ACCORDING TO PLAN, YES.
WHAT ABOUT ASIA? SHE'S GOING BACK WITH ME, RIGHT?
THAT WILL BE A LITTLE MORE COMPLICATED.

BUT I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN ABOUT THE OTHER HALF OF YOUR ZODIAC IDENTITY. IN FACT, ASIA COULD BE THE MOST CRUCIAL PLAYER OF ALL. THE FINAL ZODIAC IS STILL ON EARTH, WAITING TO BE ACTIVATED. ALTHOUGH THEY DON'T KNOW IT YET, ASIA IS CRUCIAL TO PUTTING THE FINAL AGENT INTO PLAY.
ANOTHER ZODIAC? I'D BEEN LEAD TO BELIEVE THERE WERE ONLY 12. 12 SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC, 12 AGENTS. ARE YOU TELLING ME THERE'S A 13TH?
THE 13TH WAS KEPT A SECRET, LEST THEIR IDENTITY BE DISCOVERED. BUT THE IDEA OF A 13TH IS NOT NEW TO HISTORY. THE CITIES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN THERE. HAD YOU KNOWN WHERE TO LOOK.
13 DEMON BROTHERS FOR FOR 13 ZODIAC. I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN.
IMITATION AND MOCKERY HAVE ALWAYS BEEN RELIABLE TOOLS OF THE ENEMY. BUT DON'T BE TOO HARD ON YOURSELF. EVEN MEL NEVER KNEW. HE FOUNDED THE ZODIAC, BUT HE HAD A LITTLE HELP. I WAS THERE WITH HIM, MAKING PLANS... OFTEN AT THE DIRECTION OF A POWER HIGHER THAN MEL.
SO WHAT'S THE PLAN? HOW AM I GETTING BACK?
NARA, BEFORE WE DO THIS, YOU MUST KNOW THAT WHAT WE'RE ATTEMPTING... IT'S EXPRESSLY FORBIDDEN. IT GOES AGAINST EVERY LAW ON EARTH AND HEAVEN. THERE WILL BE A PRICE.
AS LONG AS I CAN BE WITH MEL AGAIN. AND AS LONG AS I CAN HELP PUT AN END TO PITCH AND THE BEAST. I'LL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES.
VERY WELL.


LET'S TALK ABOUT THE HOLY PROPHETESS FOR A MOMENT. SHE HAS BEEN A LONGTIME COMPANION OF YOURS, YEARS BEFORE YOUR RUN AT THE PRESIDENCY.
THIS IS TRUE. THE PROPHETESS IS AN AMAZINGLY GIFTED INDIVIDUAL. I KNEW FROM THE MOMENT I MET HER THAT SHE WAS SOMEONE SPECIAL.
I TRULY BELIEVE THAT SHE HAS BEEN TOUCHED BY A HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS TO HELP USHER US ALL INTO A NEW AGE OF HUMAN UNDERSTANDING AND ENLIGHTENMENT. THE WHOLE WORLD HAS SEEN HER ABILITIES FIRST HAND.
YOU SAID IT BEST - THE MARK IS HER BLESSING TO US. AND WHEN YOU THINK BACK TO ALL THE DEATH AND PERSECUTION THAT TOOK PLACE WHEN THE FIRST MARKS BEGAN TO MANIFEST, I THINK WE ALL UNDERSTAND WHY SHE WAS INITIALLY SO RELUCTANT TO COME FORWARD AS THE ONE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEM.
THANK GOODNESS ALL OF THAT HAS CHANGED AND NOW WE HAVE PEOPLE LINING UP BY THE THOUSANDS TO RECEIVE THEIR OWN BLESSING FROM THE PROPHETESS, TO THE POINT WHERE SHE HAS NOW APPOINTED DOZENS OF DISCIPLES TO CARRY OUT HER WORK IN OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY AND AROUND THE WORLD.
BUT WHILE SHE IS HERE IN TOWN WITH YOU, SHE WILL BE CONDUCTING THE MARKING CEREMONIES HERSELF, BEGINNING TOMORROW. IF I'M NOT MISTAKEN. IN FACT, WE'LL BE CELEBRATING MY DAUGHTER'S 5TH BIRTHDAY BY BRINGING HER TO GET HER MARK THIS WEEKEND.
THAT'S GREAT. WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU THERE.
WELL, I THINK THAT ABOUT -
CITIZENS!
WE INTERRUPT THIS WOMAN MAKING A FOOL OF HERSELF ON NATIONAL TELEVSION TO BRING YOU AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!

WHERE IS THIS COMING FROM?
NO IDEA!
MY NAME IS DANIEL WEBSTER, SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF HEAVEN'S MILITIA. WE ARE MERELY A GROUP OF CONCERNED CITIZENS JUST LIKE YOURSELVES. WE ARE YOUR SONS AND DAUGHTERS, MOTHERS AND FATHERS.
YOU'VE JUST HEARD THE PRESIDENT ONCE AGAIN ATTEMPT TO LABEL US AS TERRORISTS, WHEN ALL WE WANT IS OUR FREEDOM. FREEDOM FROM PERSECUTION. FREEDOM TO WORSHIP HOW WE PLEASE. AND THE FREEDOM FROM BEING FORCED TO RECEIVE A MARK OF DUBIOUS ORIGIN ON OUR BODIES.
ZACHARY PITCH IS NOT WHO HE APPEARS TO BE. HE IS NOT OUR GREAT HOPE. HE IS NOT OUR SAVIOR. HE IS NOTHING BUT A TWISTED AMALGAMATION OF MAN AND DEMON.
SHUT IT DOWN!
I'M TRYING, SIR!

HE HAS TRIED TO HIDE HIS REAL FACE AND MASK HIS TRUE INTENTIONS. BUT WE HAVE EXPOSED HIM. HE IS THE MAN OF LAWLESSNESS WHO SITS UPON A THRONE OF BLASPHEMY.
THIS IS IT. GET READY.
HE HAS TRIED TO SILENCE US, MARGINALIZE US, AND ELIMINATE US. BUT NO MORE.
SHUT IT OFF!
TODAY WE DECLARE WAR!
BA DOOM!

CHAPTER 3
DIARY OF
Nara Kilday

Nara
Twinkle
Twinkle
Star

UNMARKED
INTERNMENT
FACILITY #81
GO! GO! GO!
I GOT YOU! HOLD ON!

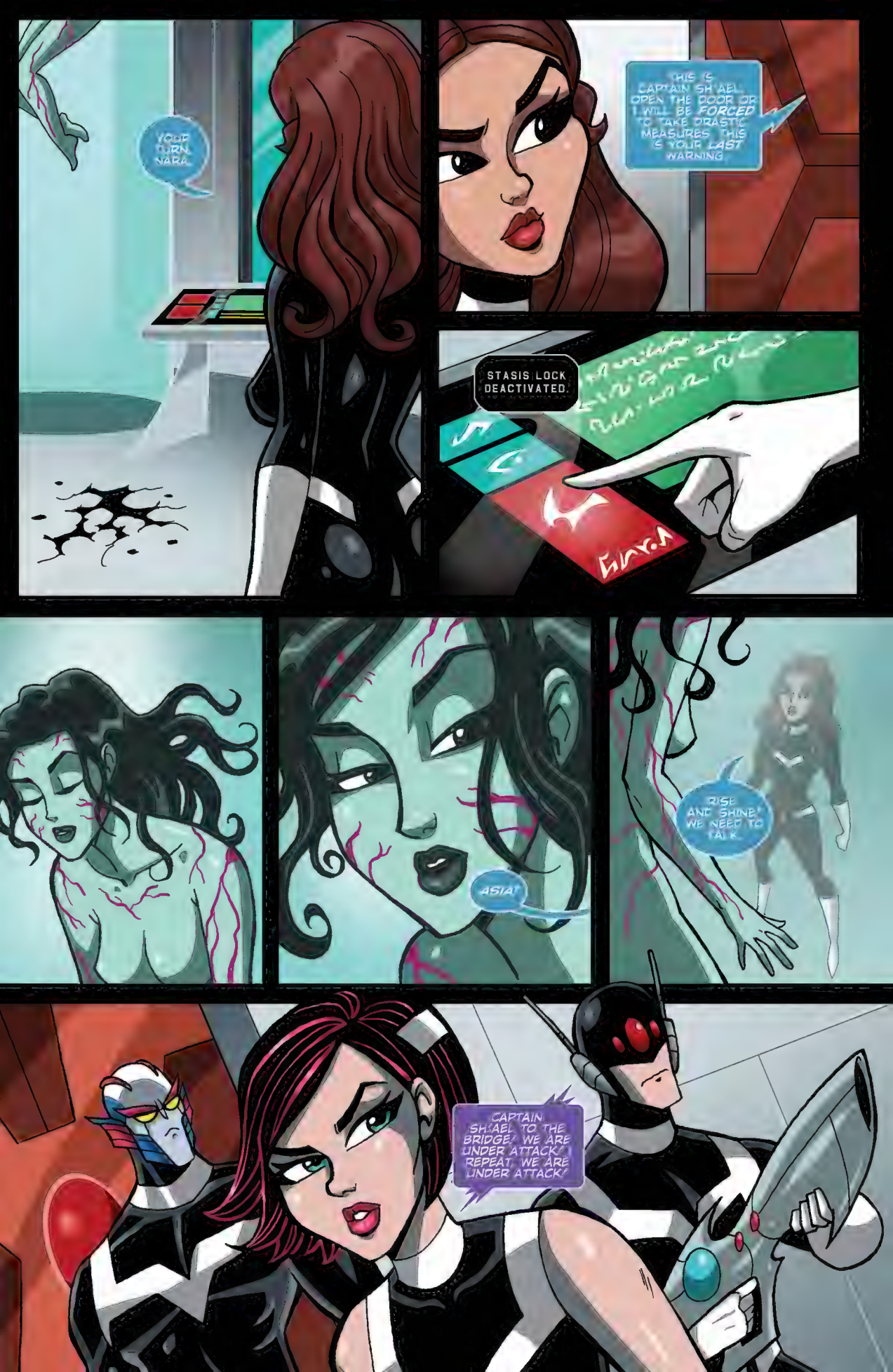
KRACK!
BEN!
GOT HER!
THANK YOU.
NO, THANK YOU, MY FRIEND. MY NAME IS MEL. OUR MEETING WAS NO COINCIDENCE. OUR PATHS CROSSED SO THAT YOU COULD RESTORE MY HOPE. I KNOW NOW THAT SOMEWHERE OUT THERE, SHE IS OKAY.
WHO?
JONATHAN! WE'VE GOT TO MOVE!
COME WITH US! WE CAN TALK LATER.
I'M SORRY. THERE ARE SOME THINGS I HAVE TO DO. GODSPEED, JONATHAN.
GODSPEED, MEL.

RISE &
SHINE!

SIR. THE CHOPPER IS PREPPED AND READY. YOU SHOULD GO.
YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO.
YES, SIR.

THE EQUINOX.
IT'S NOT RESPONDING TO ANY OF MY COMMANDS, CAPTAIN. IT APPEARS TO BE PROTECTED BY A TYPE OF OVERRIDE LOCK BEYOND MY CAPABILITIES.
ATTENTION NARA KILDAY AND ACCOMPLICE. YOU ARE IN VIOLATION OF ESV PROTOCOL AND ARE HEREBY ORDERED TO STAND DOWN AND OPEN THIS DOOR.
UM... EVE? I THINK SOMETHING IS HAPPENING!
AND NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON.
ARE YOU SURE THIS IS GOING TO WORK? MY ATOMS AREN'T GOING TO END UP SCATTERED ACROSS THE UNIVERSE, ARE THEY?
FOR ALL THAT I AM, I'M NOT OMNISCIENT, BUT I'M HOPEFUL.
GREAT!

OHMYGOD, OHMYGOD, OHMYGOD! WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME?
NARA, LISTEN TO ME! REMEMBER THE PLAN. EVERYTHING DEPENDS ON IT.


YOUR TURN, NARA.
THIS IS CAPTAIN SH'AEL. OPEN THE DOOR OR I WILL BE FORCED TO TAKE DRASTIC MEASURES. THIS IS YOUR LAST WARNING.
STASIS LOCK DEACTIVATED.
ASIA!
RISE AND SHINE. WE NEED TO TALK.
CAPTAIN SH'AEL, TO THE BRIDGE. WE ARE UNDER ATTACK. I REPEAT, WE ARE UNDER ATTACK!

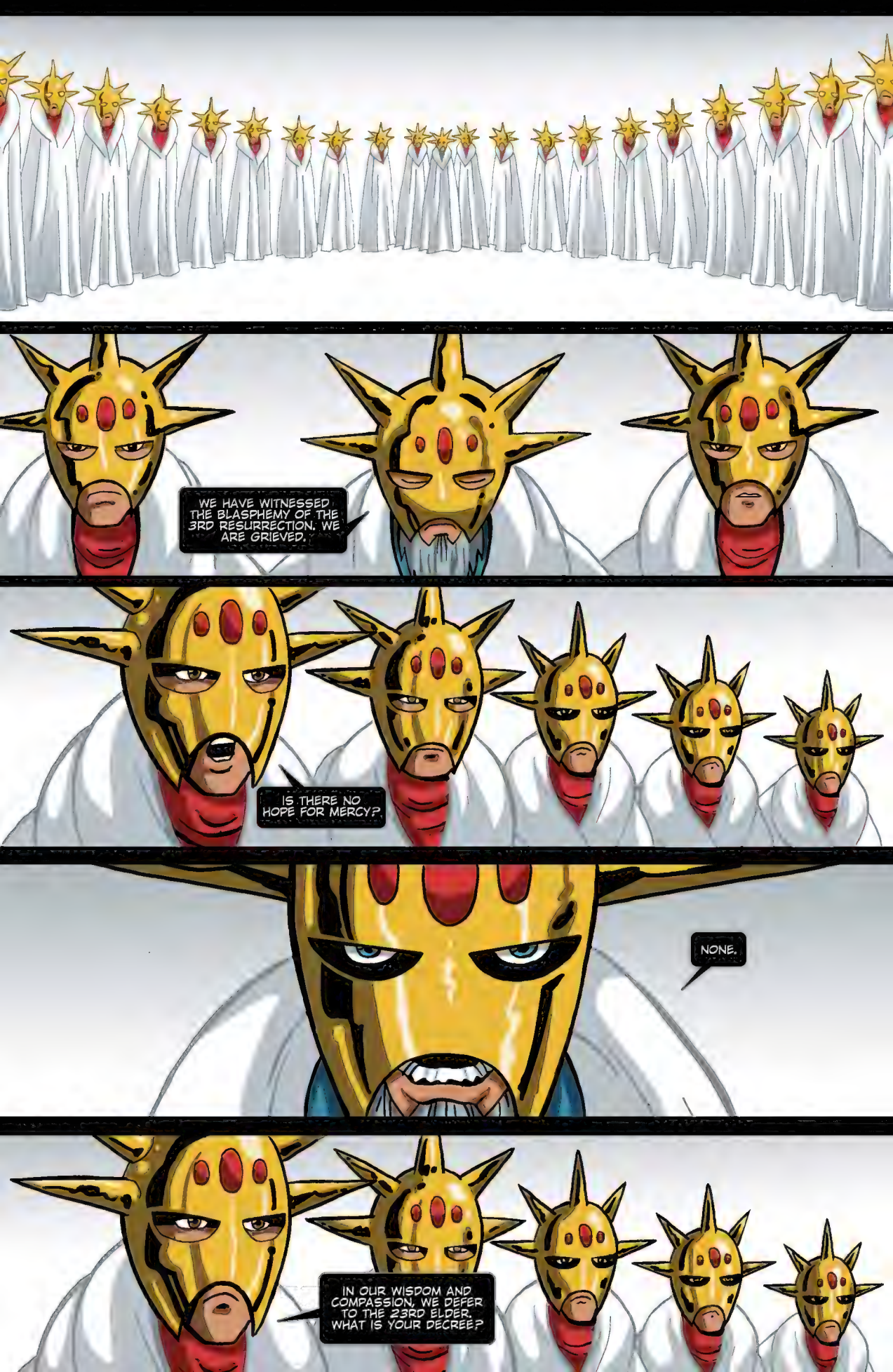
THE COUNTRY IS IN SHOCK AFTER A SERIES OF DEADLY BOMBINGS ROCKED THE CITY OF DARLINGTON HILLS TODAY. TARGETS INCLUDE INTERNMENT FACILITY 27, A STRIP MALL, AND MOST DISTURBING OF ALL, A LOCAL NEWS STATION WHERE PRESIDENT PITCH NARROWLY ESCAPED WITH HIS LIFE. AMONGST THE 48 DEAD TODAY WAS FELLOW NEWS ANCHOR KORTNI KRANE. REST IN PEACE, KORTNI.
ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE YET TO OFFICIALLY TAKE CREDIT, THE SIGNATURE CALLING CARD OF HEAVEN'S MILITIA WAS LEFT BEHIND AT THE SCENE OF ALL THREE BOMBINGS. PRESIDENT PITCH MADE THIS STATEMENT JUST MOMENTS AGO.
THIS HAS BEEN A DARK DAY FOR OUR COUNTRY. I CAN ASSURE YOU - I WILL NOT REST UNTIL JUSTICE IS DONE. THESE EXTREMISTS HAVE FINALLY GONE TOO FAR, AND WE WILL RESPOND SWIFTLY AND FORCEFULLY. AS OF TODAY, THE MILITIA IS NOW OFFICIALLY CLASSIFIED AS AN ENEMY OF THE STATE. THIS IS NO LONGER A POLICE ACTION, BUT A MILITARY ENGAGEMENT.
IBS
THEY WANT A WAR? WE'LL GIVE THEM ONE.
NOW HERE'S "TOUCHDOWN" TOM TARGUS WITH SPORTS!

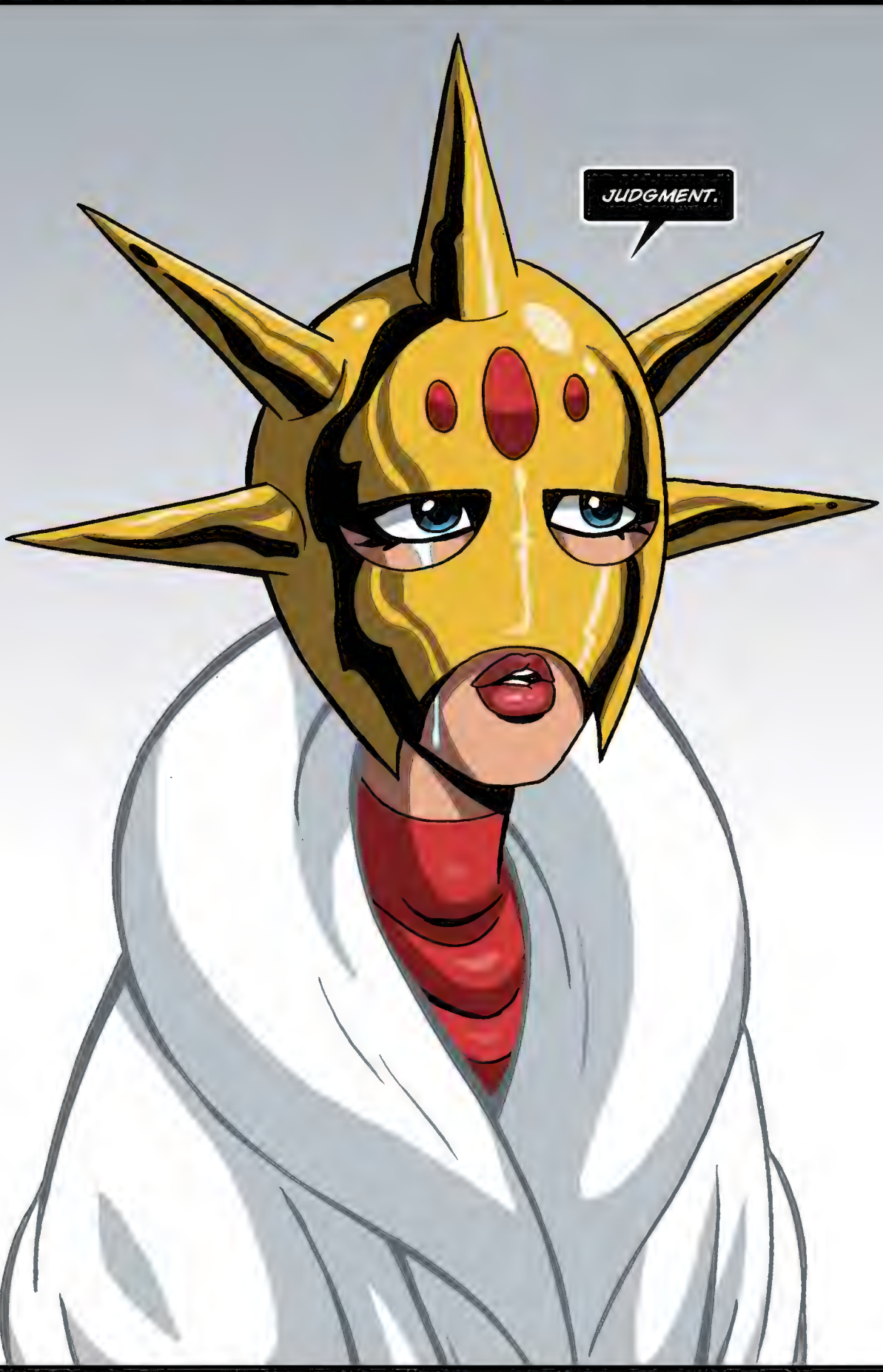
MEL!
WHERE... WHERE AM I? IT'S DARK, AND THERE'S... PEOPLE. NO *NOT* PEOPLE. I SEE EARTH. *EVE*. HER NAME IS EVE. *ASIA!* OH MY GOD! WHAT'S HAPPENING?
I'M *DYING*. NO, I'M ALIVE. I'M *ALIVE!* NOEL? NOEL, IS THAT YOU? OH NO, I THINK I'M GOING TO PASS OUT.
HEY, HEY, HEY! *RELAX*. YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT. YOU'RE JUST A LITTLE DISORIENTED.
NOEL! *OH, MY GOD!* I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
YOU DID THIS? *YOU*... BROUGHT ME BACK?!
IT WAS ALL *YOU*. *EVERYTHING* WAS IN HERE. TURNS OUT YOU WERE GIVEN *MUCH* MORE IN YOUR VISIONS THAN WE EVER REALIZED. I JUST NEEDED A NUDGE IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.
MY *DIARY*? YOU *KEPT* IT? I THOUGHT WE AGREED TO DESTROY IT?
WE DID. BUT I COULD NEVER BRING MYSELF TO DO IT. IT WAS... ALL I HAD LEFT OF YOU.
I'VE MISSED YOU, NOEL.
I'VE MISSED YOU, TOO. MORE THAN YOU KNOW.

SO, THESE MARKS. I'M GUESSING THEY'VE BECOME PERMANENT?
AFRAID SO. I TRIED TAKING THEM OFF, BUT NO LUCK.
IT'S OKAY. I'M JUST GLAD TO BE BACK. I'M NOT SURE MY STOMACH AGREES THOUGH.
YOU'RE PROBABLY STARVING. I'LL MAKE YOU SOMETHING. THERE'RE SOME CLOTHES IN THE CLOSET. PICKED UP A FEW DIFFERENT THINGS. DIDN'T KNOW WHAT YOU'D BE INTO.
SO WHERE ARE WE?
SOMEWHERE SAFE. FAR FROM CIVILIZATION - OR WHAT'S LEFT OF IT.
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN OUT HERE? DOING THIS?
LOSING YOU NEARLY DESTROYED ME. SO MUCH OF MY LIFE HAD BEEN SPENT LOOKING FOR YOU AND THEN PROTECTING YOU, THAT WHEN YOU DIED... I LOST MY WAY. I WENT DOWN A VERY DARK PATH. THEN ONE DAY, OUT OF THE DARKNESS, A WOMAN CAME TO ME AND OFFERED ME HOPE.
SHE SAID IF I WAS FAITHFUL, THEN ONE DAY YOU MIGHT COME BACK TO ME. SHE TOLD ME TO PREPARE AND WATCH FOR THE SIGNS, THAT FALLING STARS WOULD POINT THE WAY. EVER SINCE THEN, I'VE BEEN OUT HERE. WATCHING. WAITING.
I'M SORRY I CAUSED YOU SO MUCH PAIN.
YOU'RE HERE NOW. THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS.
PITCH. HE'S FINALLY DONE IT. THIS IS ALL BECAUSE OF ME - WHAT I UNLEASHED. I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL OF THIS.
NO. THERE'S NOTHING YOU COULD HAVE DONE TO STOP IT. WE'RE JUST WITNESSING THE END RESULT OF THINGS SET INTO MOTION LONG BEFORE WE WERE EVEN BORN.
BREE. SHE'S OUT THERE, STILL FIGHTING.

SHE'S GOOD. THE WHOLE RESISTANCE HAS RALLIED AROUND HER. I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN SHE LEARNED FROM YOU.
WAS THIS HER? IS THIS WHAT SHE'S DOING?
SUSPECTS SOUGHT IN BOMBING
NO. FROM WHAT I CAN TELL, THE EXTENT OF THE MILITIA'S INVOLVEMENT WAS JUST TO PROVIDE THE MEANS OF ESCAPE FOR THE PRISONERS OF INTERNMENT 27. THE REST OF THE BOMBINGS, ALL THE DEATHS - THAT WAS ALL PITCH AND HIS REGIME. ANYTHING TO -
SUSPECTS
...THREE MEN WANTED IN CONNECTION TO THE BOMBINGS EARLIER TODAY. THEY ARE CONSIDERED ARMED AND EXTREMELY DANGEROUS. IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION ON THEIR CURRENT WHEREABOUTS, CONTACT THE LOCAL DEFENSE FORCE IMMEDIATELY.
DAD!
NARA, WAIT! YOU CAN'T RUSH INTO THIS. YOU NEED TIME TO REST.
I'M ALL OUT OF TIME. HE NEEDS ME. THEY BOTH NEED ME.
BOTH?
LONG STORY.
NARA, THIS IS IT. YOU REALIZE THAT, DON'T YOU? EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE, ALL YOU'VE FOUGHT FOR - LIVE OR DIE, WE'RE NEARING THE END. YOU HAVE TO BE READY.

THEN LET'S END IT.


WE HAVE WITNESSED THE BLASPHEMY OF THE 3RD RESURRECTION. WE ARE GRIEVED.
IS THERE NO HOPE FOR MERCY?
NONE.
IN OUR WISDOM AND COMPASSION, WE DEFER TO THE 23RD ELDER. WHAT IS YOUR DECREE?


JUDGMENT.

KRAK
INTERNMENT FACILITY 027.
SUB-LEVEL 3.
MAXIMUM SECURITY WING.
SHUK!
CHAPTER 4

SPLAT
THUK
BLAM!

UKK! AHHK!
URRAAAHHRRR!!
SHIK
YOU OKAY?
FINE.
DON'T PLAY TOUGH, NARA. ARE YOU INJURED?
I'M FINE.
YOUR BODY HAS BEEN THROUGH A LOT. IT'S OKAY TO -
I SAID I'M FINE!
INTERNMENT 27
"... in the name of unity."

I DON'T KNOW *WHAT* YOU'RE EXPECTING TO FIND. IF YOUR FATHER HAD BEEN CAUGHT IT WOULD BE ALL OVER THE NEWS BY NOW.
SEARCH / INMATES / ADMITTED LAST:
1 MONTH
2 MONTHS
3 MONTHS
4 MONTHS
5 MONTHS
6 MONTHS
...MORE
I'M NOT LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ON MY FATHER.
NAME: MORRELL, TI
STATUS: ESCAPED
NAME: DOE, JOHN
STATUS: ESCAPED
NAME: ALMEIDA, TON
STATUS: DECEASED
HE WAS *HERE.*
WHO'S *"HE?"*
MEL...
PRINT
...MY *HUSBAND.*

HUSBAND?
I'M HERE TO SET YOU FREE. BUT I NEED SOMETHING FROM YOU IN RETURN. I NEED *INFORMATION.*
HAVE *ANY* OF YOU SEEN THIS MAN?
ALL RIGHT, THEN. TELL ME *HOW* I CAN CONTACT HEAVEN'S MILITIA. I NEED TO SPEAK TO *BREE STRAUSS.*

U.S. AIRBASE, IRAQ.

DARLINGTON HILLS GRAND PLAZA HOTEL
MAIN CONFERENCE ROOM, 8TH FLOOR
PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEFING
MR. PRESIDENT, THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST HAS REACHED A TIPPING POINT. THE U.I.S.* HAS LAUNCHED ITS GROUND OFFENSIVE. OUR ALLIES -
ARE ON THEIR OWN.
* UNITED ISLAMIC STATE
SIR, THEY ARE COMPLETELY SURROUNDED. IF WE DON'T INTERVENE -
NEXT!
THE OUTBREAK ON THE EAST COAST HAS JUST BEEN EXPANDED TO INCLUDE THREE MORE STATES. THE VIRUS IS SHOWING NO SIGNS OF SLOWING DOWN. THE DEATH TOLL FOR THE SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA QUAKES CONTINUES TO RISE AND NOW STANDS AT NEARLY 1600.
THE ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT IS GRIM. MORE MASS ANIMAL DEATHS - MOST NOTABLY AMONG BIRDS AND FISH. IN THE MIDWEST, REPORTS OF MASSIVE UNEXPLAINED CRACKS AND FISSURES CONTINUE TO ROLL IN. SOLAR FLARE ACTIVITY -
THANK YOU. THAT WILL BE ALL.
UM, SIR. THERE IS ONE MORE THING.

THERE'S BEEN ANOTHER *INCIDENT* AT INTERNMENT *27.*
ALL REMAINING PRISONERS HAVE ESCAPED...
...GUARDS AND PERSONNEL *SLAUGHTERED.*
WE WERE ABLE TO PULL AN IMAGE OF THE PERPETRATOR FROM SURVEILLANCE.
I'M COMING FOR YOU ABE

GET OUT.
GET OUT.
GET OUT.
GET! OUT!

HOW DID THIS HAPPEN? HOW COULD SHE POSSIBLY -- DID YOU KNOW ABOUT THIS?
ARE YOU AFRAID?
DID YOU KNOW??!!
NO. IT WAS HIDDEN FROM ME, BUT IT MATTERS NOT.
WHAT DO WE DO?
YOU TRULY FEAR HER, DON'T YOU?
I FEAR NO ONE!
THEN COMPOSE YOURSELF! WE ARE ENGAGED IN OPEN REBELLION WITH NONE OTHER THAN THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE. IF ONE SMALL GIRL IS ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU PISS YOURSELF, THEN I QUESTION YOUR COMMITMENT. I WASN'T MISTAKEN ABOUT YOU, WAS I, ABRAHAM?
NO.
GOOD. THE KEY TO HER DOWNFALL HAS ALREADY PRESENTED ITSELF. BEFORE THIS IS OVER, SHE WILL BREAK. SHE WILL ABANDON HER GOD, AND THEN SHE WILL BE OURS.

EXPAND THE SEARCH TEAM OUT FARTHER NORTH. IT'S POSSIBLE THEY'VE GONE DEEPER INTO RESIDENTIAL. MORE PLACES TO HIDE.
AND IT'S ALSO POSSIBLE THEY'VE ALREADY BEEN CAUGHT AND EXECUTED.
I'M SORRY. I SHOULDN'T HAVE SAID THAT.
I'M SCARED, DANIEL. FOR THE FIRST TIME I'M REALLY, TRULY SCARED. WHAT IF WE FAIL?
SIR! WE'VE GOT VISITORS!
PUT THE GUN AWAY, DANIEL.
NICE PLACE YOU GOT HERE, BREE. PRETTY BRILLIANT, ACTUALLY. PROBABLY THE LAST PLACE PITCH WOULD EVER THINK TO LOOK.

NARA! OH MY GOD! I KNEW YOU'D FIND A WAY BACK! I KNEW IT!
GOOD TO SEE YOU, TOO. YOU'VE DONE GOOD, KID. I'M PROUD OF YOU.
BREE, THIS IS NOEL. I WOULDN'T BE HERE WITHOUT HIM.
NICE TO FINALLY MEET YOU IN PERSON, BREE. I KNEW YOUR FATHER. HE WAS A GOOD MAN.
THANK YOU. NOW, MAY I ASK HOW THE HELL YOU FOUND US?
I HAD A LITTLE HELP FROM SOME FRIENDS OF YOURS.
JAMES? WYATT?!!
I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD.
SORRY, MA'AM. JUST GOT A LITTLE HELD UP IS ALL. BUT WE NEVER TALKED, NEVER GAVE YOU UP. EVEN WHEN THEY... WHEN THEY...
IT'S OKAY. ALL THAT MATTERS IS THAT YOU'RE BACK NOW.
THIS HERE'S ALDO. GOOD FELLA. GOT THROWN IN WITH US A FEW DAYS AGO.
HE'D BEEN BEEN WAGING HIS OWN PRIVATE LITTLE WAR WITH THE REGIME AND NOW WANTS TO ADD HIS MUSCLE TO OURS.
IT'S AN HONOR TO MEET YOU, MS. STRAUSS. YOU'RE AN INSPIRATION TO ALL WHO OPPOSE TYRANNY.

AN ENEMY OF PITCH IS A FRIEND OF MINE. WELCOME TO THE MILITIA.
DANIEL WILL GET YOU FOOD, MEDICAL ATTENTION, AND WHATEVER ELSE YOU NEED. WE'LL TALK MORE LATER, GENTLEMEN. IT'S GOOD TO HAVE YOU BACK.
THANKS, BREE. FOR ALL THIS. FOR NOT GIVING UP.
I LEARNED FROM THE BEST. BUT THE TRUTH IS, I HAVE WANTED TO GIVE UP. MANY TIMES. HOPE IS HARD TO COME BY THESE DAYS. BUT SEEING YOU WALK THROUGH THAT DOOR, SEEING MY MEN ALIVE AND WELL - I FEEL LIKE WE MIGHT HAVE A REAL CHANCE AFTER ALL.
NARA, THERE'S SOMETHING YOU HAVE TO KNOW THOUGH. I'M NOT EVEN SURE HOW TO TELL YOU...
MY FATHER. I KNOW. HAVE YOU HEARD ANY-THING?
NOTHING. BUT WE HAVEN'T GIVEN UP. YOU'D BE PROUD OF HIM. IN MANY WAYS HE'S BEEN THE BACKBONE OF THE MILITIA. AFTER LOSING YOU, AND THEN YOUR MOM, I THINK HE REALLY NEEDED TO FIND HIS PURPOSE AGAIN.
HE POURED HIS HEART AND SOUL INTO THE RESISTANCE. THE HARDEST PART HAS BEEN LOOKING HIM IN THE EYE AND NOT BEING ABLE TO TELL HIM . . . HECK, I DON'T KNOW WHAT I WOULD HAVE TOLD HIM EVEN IF I HAD WANTED TO.
UNNH!
NARA!
SHE'S PUSHED HERSELF TOO HARD. SHE NEEDS REST.
TAKE MY BUNK. GO GET SOME SLEEP. YOU'VE EARNED IT.

YOU WANT TO TALK?
WHAT ABOUT?
THAT WAS A *PRETTY* BIG BOMB YOU DROPPED ON ME EARLIER. YOU KNOW, THE WHOLE *HUSBAND* THING.
OH, RIGHT. *THAT.*
HIS NAME IS *MEL*. AS IN *MELCHIZEDEK*. I'M *SURE* YOU KNOW THE NAME.
THE *GREAT* BIBLICAL "*MAN OF MYSTERY*."
THAT'S THE ONE. WE MET IN PURGATORY. IT'S HARD TO EXPLAIN. IT DIDN'T *EXACTLY* MAKE SENSE TO ME EITHER, BUT I JUST KNEW IT WAS *RIGHT*. LIKE I'D BEEN WAITING FOR HIM MY WHOLE LIFE. AND *HE* HAD BEEN WAITING FOR *ME*. I *WANTED* TO TELL YOU. I WAS JUST... *AFRAID*.
WHY?
I DON'T KNOW. I FELT ALMOST *GUILTY*. LIKE... LIKE IT WAS GOING TO *HURT* YOU.

I'M HAPPY FOR YOU. I *REALLY* AM. IT'S JUST THAT... YOU REMIND ME A *LOT* OF SARA. *ESPECIALLY* THE OLDER YOU'VE GOTTEN. I SEE HER IN YOUR *SMILE*, *HEAR* HER IN YOUR VOICE. IT'S... *BITTERSWEET*. BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY, I SEE A STRONG, *BEAUTIFUL* WOMAN WHO HAS *COMPLETELY* GROWN INTO HER OWN PERSON.
I'VE *ALWAYS* HAD TO WALK A FINE LINE BETWEEN FRIEND, MENTOR, AND SURROGATE FATHER, NEVER BEING *FULLY* ANY OF THEM. AND NOW THAT YOU'VE *MET* SOMEONE, I HAVE TO COME TO TERMS WITH THE FACT THAT I WON'T BE THE NUMBER ONE MAN IN YOUR LIFE ANYMORE. IT'S JUST... *HARD* TO LET GO.
NARA, WHAT I'M *TRYING* TO SAY IS--
YOU DON'T *HAVE* TO LET GO, NOEL! THE PLACE YOU HAVE IN MY LIFE, IN MY *HEART*, NO ONE COULD *EVER* REPLACE. I OWE YOU *EVERYTHING*. I *LOVE* MEL. BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN I CARE FOR YOU *ANY* LESS.
STOP HIM!!
HE COMPLETELY *FLIPPED OUT* DURING HIS MEDICAL! STARTED *FLAILING AROUND*, SCREAMING. I THINK HE MIGHT HAVE A WEAPON!
ALL RIGHT, BUDDY. *TRY* TO CALM DOWN. I CAN ONLY *IMAGINE* WHAT YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH. BUT WE *WANT* TO HELP.
I'M *NOT* CRAZY! I GAVE MYSELF *WILLINGLY* TO THE CAUSE! I HAD YOU ALL FOOLED! *IDIOTS!* YOU *VERMIN* MAKE ME *SICK!* YOUR KIND WILL BE *WIPED* FROM THE EARTH FOR THE *GOOD* OF HUMANITY!
I GIVE MY LIFE IN THE NAME OF *PROGESS* AND *UNITY*. I *SPIT* IN THE FACE OF YOUR GOD. *ALL GLORY TO PITCH!*

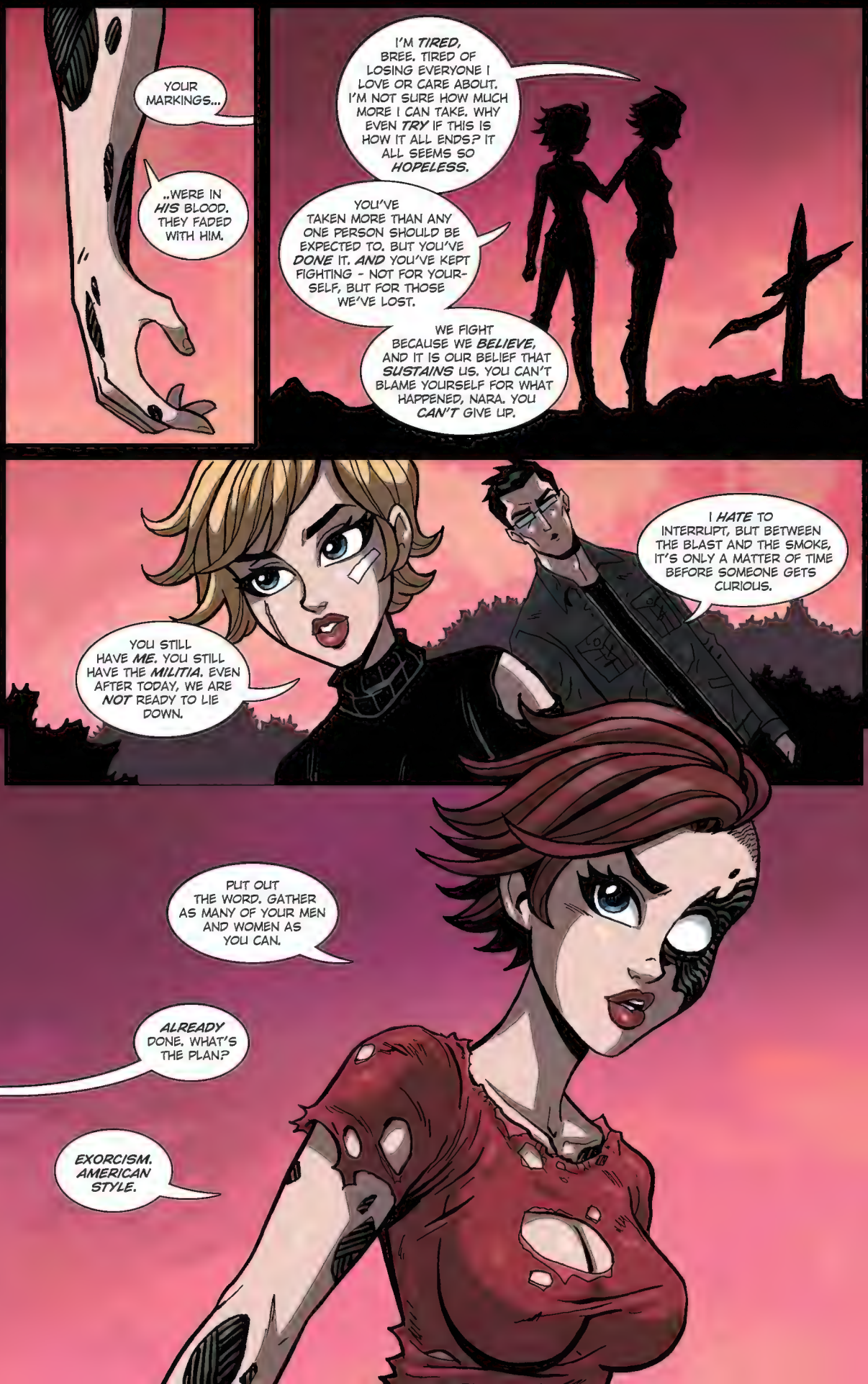
NO!
BOOM

IRAQ. THE RIVER EUPHRATES.
HOW LONG'VE YOU BEEN FOLLOWING ME?
I MUST ASK YOU SOMETHING.
LOOK, *FRIEND*. I'VE GOT SOME PRETTY IMPORTANT *BUSINESS* TO ATTEND TO, SO WHY DON'T YOU JUST MOVE ALONG FOR *BOTH* OUR SAKES. I'M NOT *INTERESTED* IN CONVERTING TO YOUR DEATH CULT *OR* LOSING MY HEAD OVER IT. SO GET LOST.
I DO NOT *SERVE* THE DEMON GOD. BUT I HAVE EXPERIENCED THE *CRUELTY* OF THE SERVANTS OF ALLAHBOGG *FIRST HAND*. NO, I ONLY COME TO YOU WITH A QUESTION. A WOMAN TOLD ME TO SEEK YOU OUT.
SHE TOLD ME THAT A FALLING STAR WOULD POINT THE WAY. SHE SAID YOU COULD HELP ME REMEMBER *WHO* I AM.

SO TELL ME....
...DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM?

FORMER RESIDENCE
OF ABRAHAM PITCH.
CURRENT HEADQUARTERS
OF HEAVEN'S MILITIA.
CHAPTER 5

GOODBYE.
I'M SORRY, NARA. IS THERE ANYTHING YOU NEED? ANYTHING I CAN DO?
I'M FINE.
WELL, FORGIVE ME FOR SAYING SO, BUT YOU LOOK LIKE HELL. WILL YOU PLEASE JUST LET ANDREW CHECK YOU OUT?
THERE'S NOTHING TO BE DONE. THIS IS THE PRICE I PAY FOR COMING BACK.


YOUR MARKINGS...
..WERE IN HIS BLOOD. THEY FADED WITH HIM.
I'M TIRED, BREE. TIRED OF LOSING EVERYONE I LOVE OR CARE ABOUT. I'M NOT SURE HOW MUCH MORE I CAN TAKE. WHY EVEN TRY IF THIS IS HOW IT ALL ENDS? IT ALL SEEMS SO HOPELESS.
YOU'VE TAKEN MORE THAN ANY ONE PERSON SHOULD BE EXPECTED TO. BUT YOU'VE DONE IT. AND YOU'VE KEPT FIGHTING - NOT FOR YOURSELF, BUT FOR THOSE WE'VE LOST.
WE FIGHT BECAUSE WE BELIEVE, AND IT IS OUR BELIEF THAT SUSTAINS US. YOU CAN'T BLAME YOURSELF FOR WHAT HAPPENED, NARA. YOU CAN'T GIVE UP.
I HATE TO INTERRUPT, BUT BETWEEN THE BLAST AND THE SMOKE, IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE SOMEONE GETS CURIOUS.
YOU STILL HAVE ME. YOU STILL HAVE THE MILITIA. EVEN AFTER TODAY, WE ARE NOT READY TO LIE DOWN.
PUT OUT THE WORD. GATHER AS MANY OF YOUR MEN AND WOMEN AS YOU CAN.
ALREADY DONE. WHAT'S THE PLAN?
EXORCISM. AMERICAN STYLE.

SORRY, KID. I HAVE NO IDEA WHO YOU ARE.
YOU MUST! THE WOMAN TOLD ME-
WHAT WOMAN?
SHE HAD WAVY BROWN HAIR. DEEP DARK EYES. SHE WAS LIKE THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN IN THE WORLD.
EVE.
ALL RIGHT, KID. COME ALONG. BUT STAY CLOSE.
WE'RE GOING TO THE WORST PLACE ON EARTH.

GAH! HELP!
GAK!!
WHO.
SEEKS.
PASSAGE?
YOU KNOW WHO I AM.
PROVE IT.
DUDE, ARE THOSE... EYEBALLS?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH YOUR HAND? IS IT GLOWING?
SHUT. UP.
WELCOME BACK, MIGHTY MELCHIZEDEK.
WOW.

DARLINGTON HILLS AMPHITHEATER- "MARKED" OPENING CEREMONIES.
WE ARE 1
Pitch is my SAVIOR!
I don't believe in God, but I believe in PITCH!
MARKED 4 LIFE!
UNITY
DO YOU PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE NEW ORDER OF MAN, AND TO ITS HERALD AND EMISSARY ZACHARY PITCH, AND TO THE ERADICATION OF OUR ENEMIES?
I DO!

I ANOINT YOU IN THE NAME OF MAN, AND EARTH, AND UNITY.
WE
THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING. WE WILL RESUME THE CEREMONIES SHORTLY. BUT FIRST, I HAVE A SPECIAL SURPRISE FOR YOU ALL.
AS YOU KNOW, JUST TWO DAYS AGO THIS CITY SUFFERED A DEVASTATING ATTACK AT THE HANDS OF OUR ENEMIES - AN ATTACK FROM WHICH I BARELY ESCAPED WITH MY LIFE.
TONIGHT, I AM PROUD TO ANNOUNCE THAT WE HAVE CAPTURED THE PERPETRATORS RESPONSIBLE, AND I HAVE BROUGHT THEM HERE TO ANSWER FOR THEIR CRIMES AGAINST US!

DAD!
GO TO HELL!
BOO!
MONSTERS!
DIE!
WAIT! WAIT, MY FRIENDS! HEAR ME OUT! IN MY MERCY AND COMPASSION, I HAVE DECIDED THAT I WILL ALLOW THEM ONE LAST CHANCE TO DO THE RIGHT THING - SUBMIT TO MY AUTHORITY AND TAKE THE MARK.
IF THEY ACCEPT, THEY WILL BE GIVEN A FAIR TRIAL WITH THE CHANCE TO LIVE OUT THE REMAINDER OF THEIR DAYS PAYING OFF THEIR DEBT TO SOCIETY. IF THEY REFUSE, THEY WILL FACE SWIFT JUSTICE.
NARA! NOT YET!

DO YOU PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE TO THE NEW ORDER OF MAN, AND TO ITS HERALD AND EMISSARY ZACHARY PITCH, AND TO THE ERADICATION OF OUR ENEMIES?
I ONLY SERVE ONE GOD. AND HE DOESN'T DEMAND OBEDIENCE AT THE POINT OF GUN OR BLADE!
BLAM
KYLE!
DO YOU PLEDGE -
NO!!

BLAM!
NEXT.
NO!
HOLD YOUR FIRE! LET'S SEE HOW THIS PLAYS OUT.
SMAK!
DAD! RUN!
NARA?

DAD! DAD, I'M SORRY!
WELL. WHAT A SURPRISE.
DAMN YOU, PITCH!
IS THAT ANY WAY TO THANK THE MAN WHO ORGANIZED THIS LITTLE FAMILY REUNION?
JUST LET HIM GO! TAKE ME IN HIS PLACE!
WHAT DO YOU THINK, DAD? YOUR DAUGHTER, ADOPTED DAUGHTER - ALIVE ALL THESE YEARS AND YOU NEVER KNEW.
IMAGINE ALL THE HEARTACHE AND GRIEF SHE COULD HAVE SAVED YOU. TO THINK YOUR WIFE DIED WITHOUT EVER KNOWING THE TRUTH. JUST LIKE YOU NEARLY DID. WHAT DO YOU SAY IN THE FACE OF SUCH DECEPTION?
WE KNEW. WE ALWAYS KNEW.

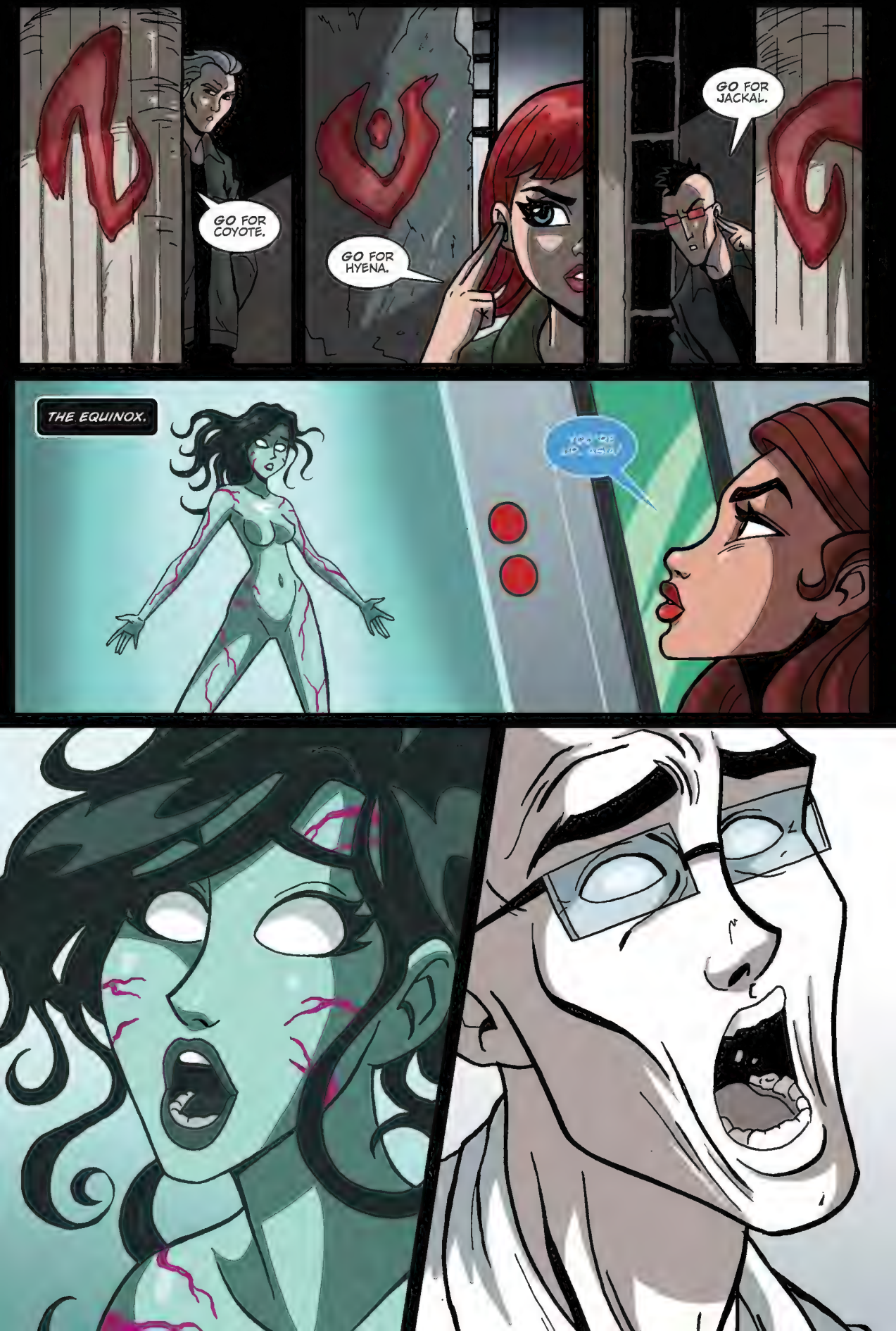
BLAM

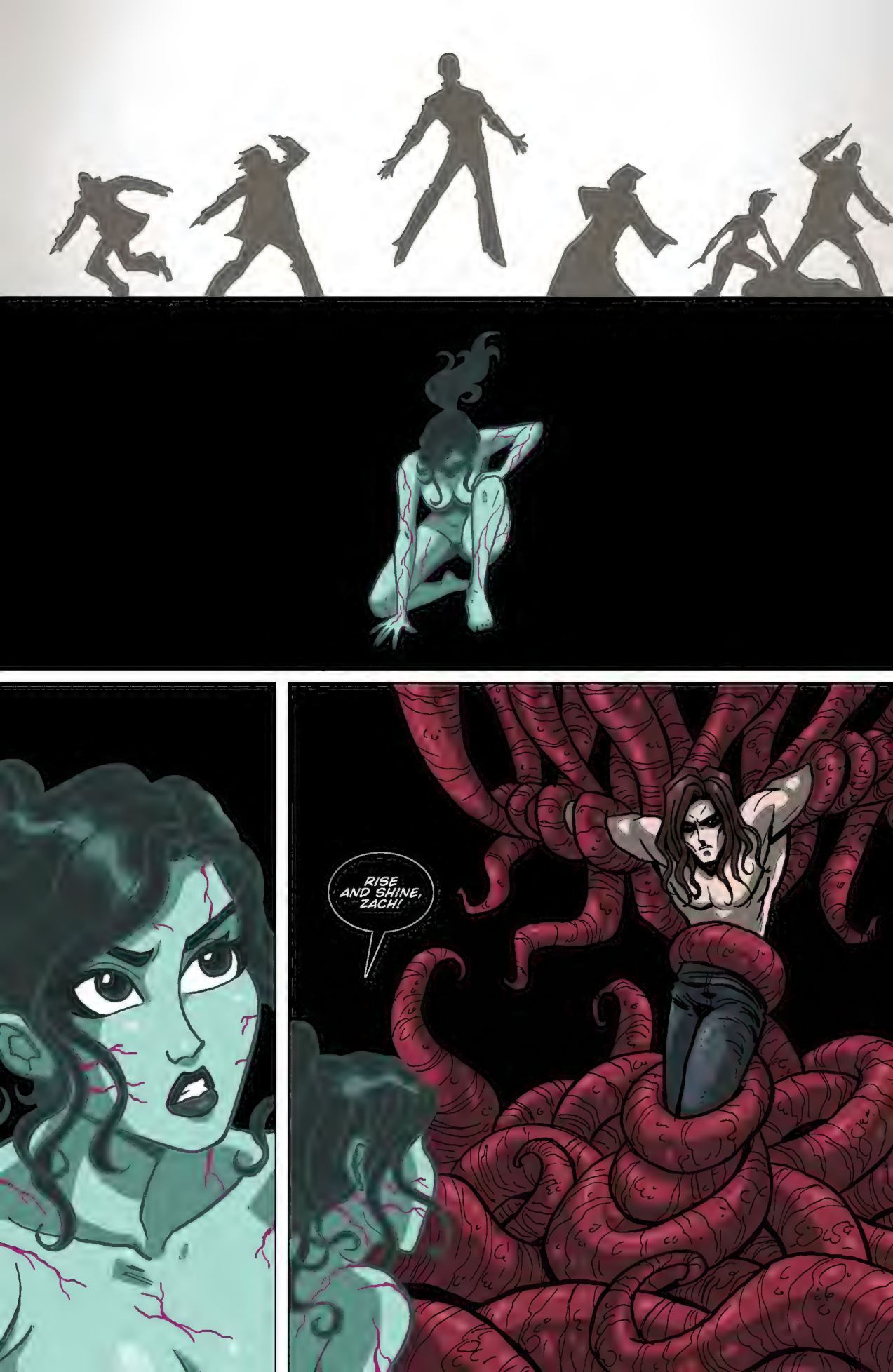
NO, NO, NO! DAD, PLEASE! DON'T LEAVE ME!
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, MARKED AND SOON-TO-BE, I *APOLOGIZE* FOR THE BRUTALITY YOU JUST WITNESSED. THIS IS HOW EVIL MUST BE DEALT WITH. SWIFTLY AND *DECISIVELY*.
WHAT I DID, I DID OUT OF *LOVE*. LOVE FOR *YOU*. LOVE FOR JUSTICE. AND *LOVE* FOR THIS YOUNG WOMAN.

THIS IS NARA KILDAY. SHE AND I HAVE KNOWN EACH OTHER FOR A *VERY* LONG TIME. IN MANY WAYS, SHE HAS HELPED ME TO BECOME THE MAN I AM TODAY. BUT OUR RELATIONSHIP HAS BEEN AN *ANTAGONISTIC* ONE.
IT'S HARDLY *SURPRISING* THOUGH. HOW MUCH OF A CHANCE DID SHE *REALLY* HAVE, BEING RAISED BY A MONSTER LIKE JONATHAN KILDAY. BUT I AM A *BIG* BELIEVER IN REDEMPTION. I'VE *NEVER* GIVEN UP HOPE IN YOU, NARA.
IT IS *NEVER* TOO LATE TO WALK INTO THE LIGHT AND TURN YOUR BACK ON YOUR *WICKED* WAYS. SO, IN MY *INFINITE* MERCY, I REACH OUT MY HAND TO YOU.
I OFFER YOU PEACE AND *FORGIVENESS*, AND PERHAPS ONE DAY, EVEN *FRIEND-SHIP*.

WE
ARE
WOOHOO!
ALL RIGHT!
WOOHOO!
YEAH!
NOW, SHALL WE MAKE IT *OFFICIAL*? WILL YOU TAKE MY MARK AND *END* THIS BLOOD-SHED?

ALL TEAMS READY.
I'VE GOT A BETTER IDEA. HOW ABOUT YOU...
...TAKE MINE INSTEAD.
WHAT...?
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?


GO FOR COYOTE.
GO FOR HYENA.
GO FOR JACKAL.
THE EQUINOX.
YOU'RE UP, ASIA.


RISE AND SHINE, ZACH!

HUH? WHO ARE- WAIT, I KNOW YOU!
YEAH, YEAH, YEAH. THE GIRL YOU LEFT FOR DEAD IS NOW HERE TO SAVE YOU. LOOK, WE CAN REMINISCE LATER. RIGHT NOW IT'S ALL BUSINESS.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
SETTING YOU FREE.
I'VE JUST SEVERED YOUR SPIRIT FROM YOUR BODY. NOW THE INFECTION WILL SPREAD, CEASING ALL BIOLOGICAL FUNCTIONS. THERE'S NOTHING LEFT TO HOLD ON TO. YOUR HOUSE GUESTS WILL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO EVACUATE.
I'M GOING TO DIE?
MOST DEFINITELY. BUT DON'T WORRY...

...THIS IS WHERE THINGS GET INTERESTING.

CHAPTER 6
GAH!
AAHHK!!
NNNGG... NO!!

HELLLP... HELP ME!
DO AS HE SAYS! GET HIM OUT OF HERE!
SHE'A
AWAKEN!
DID WE DO IT? IS IT... DONE?
YEAH. YOU DID GOOD, DAD. THANK YOU.

HOLD ON, DAD.
I NEED YOU TO HOLD ON FOR JUST A LITTLE LONGER. STAY WITH ME AND WE CAN TAKE HIM DOWN.
YOU CAN GO NOW, DAD. IT'S OKAY.
I LOVE YOU.
NARA! WE'VE GOT TO GO!

I'M NOT LEAVING HIM!
HE'S GONE! WE GO NOW OR WE'RE ALL DEAD!
THIS IS IT FOR ME. I'M DONE, BREE. I'M -
UNH!
NARA!
ARE
ENCING
NICAL
CULTIES.
EASE
ND BY.
EXPERIE
TECHNIC
DIFFICULTIES
PLEASE
STAND BY

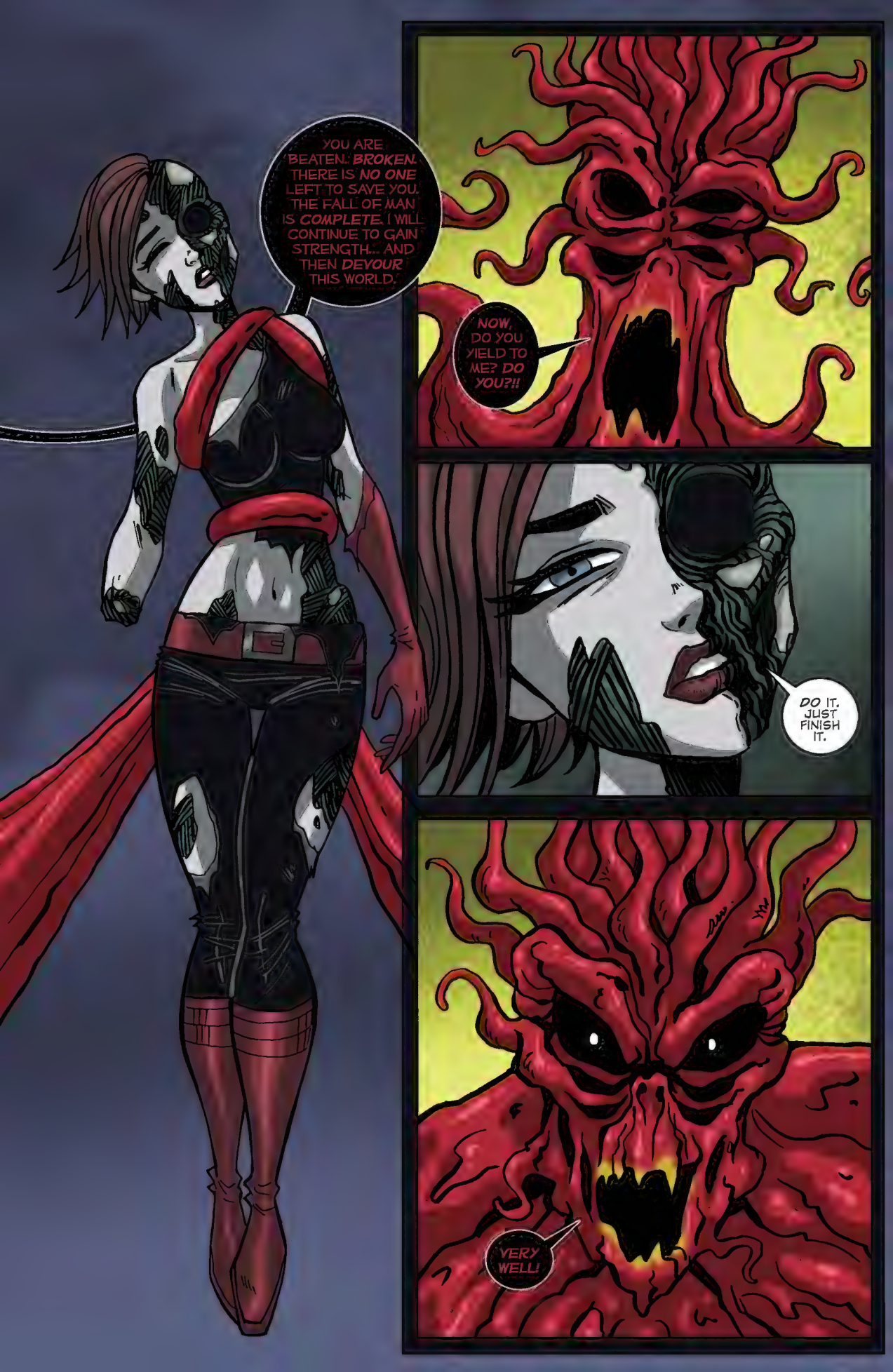
NO!
IRAQ. SOMEWHERE BENEATH THE EUPHRATES.
WHAT *IS* THIS PLACE? IT FEELS ALL *WRONG.* LIKE-
DEATH.
KEEP YOUR DISTANCE, KID. IN FACT, BEST YOU STAY OUT OF SIGHT.
GOOD EVENING, GENTLEMEN.
THE HOUR MUST BE *LATE* FOR THE GREAT *MELCHIZEDEK* TO ENTER OUR PRESENCE.
IT'S BEEN A WHILE. HOW ARE THOSE *CHAINS* TREATING YOU?

GET ON WITH IT. WHY HAVE YOU COME, FORSAKEN ONE?
THE BEAST HAS RISEN. HE'S AMASSED AN ARMY - NEARLY A THIRD OF MANKIND HAVE GIVEN THEMSELVES OVER TO HIM. I NEED YOU TO DO WHAT YOU DO.
NO ONE WANTS ANYTHING TO DO WITH AN ANGEL OF DEATH UNTIL THEY NEED SOMEONE TO DO THEIR DIRTY WORK.
DROP THE PRETENSE. YOU'VE WAITED THOUSANDS OF YEARS FOR THIS MOMENT. DEATH IS WHAT YOU WERE MADE FOR.
BY MY AUTHORITY, I RELEASE YOU.
URRRAAAHH!!!

YOU HAVE OUR GRATITUDE, FORGOTTEN SON. IN RETURN, I GIVE TO YOU...
...A REMINDER OF YOUR HUMANITY. SEEMS FITTING THAT BEFORE THE END, YOU TASTE TRUE DEATH LIKE THE REST OF YOUR KIND...
...MIGHTY MELCHIZEDEK.
!!
DUDE! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
NO, NOT REALLY. ME AND ANGELS... NEVER GOT ALONG TOO WELL. SOMETHING ABOUT ME NOT KNOWING MY PLACE, HEH.
WHAT DO I DO?
DON'T FREAK OUT, KID. SOMEONE WILL BE ALONG SHORTLY FOR THAT CHAIN. THEY SHOULD HAVE THE ANSWERS YOU NEED. IF YOU COULD JUST... PASS ALONG A MESSAGE FOR ME...

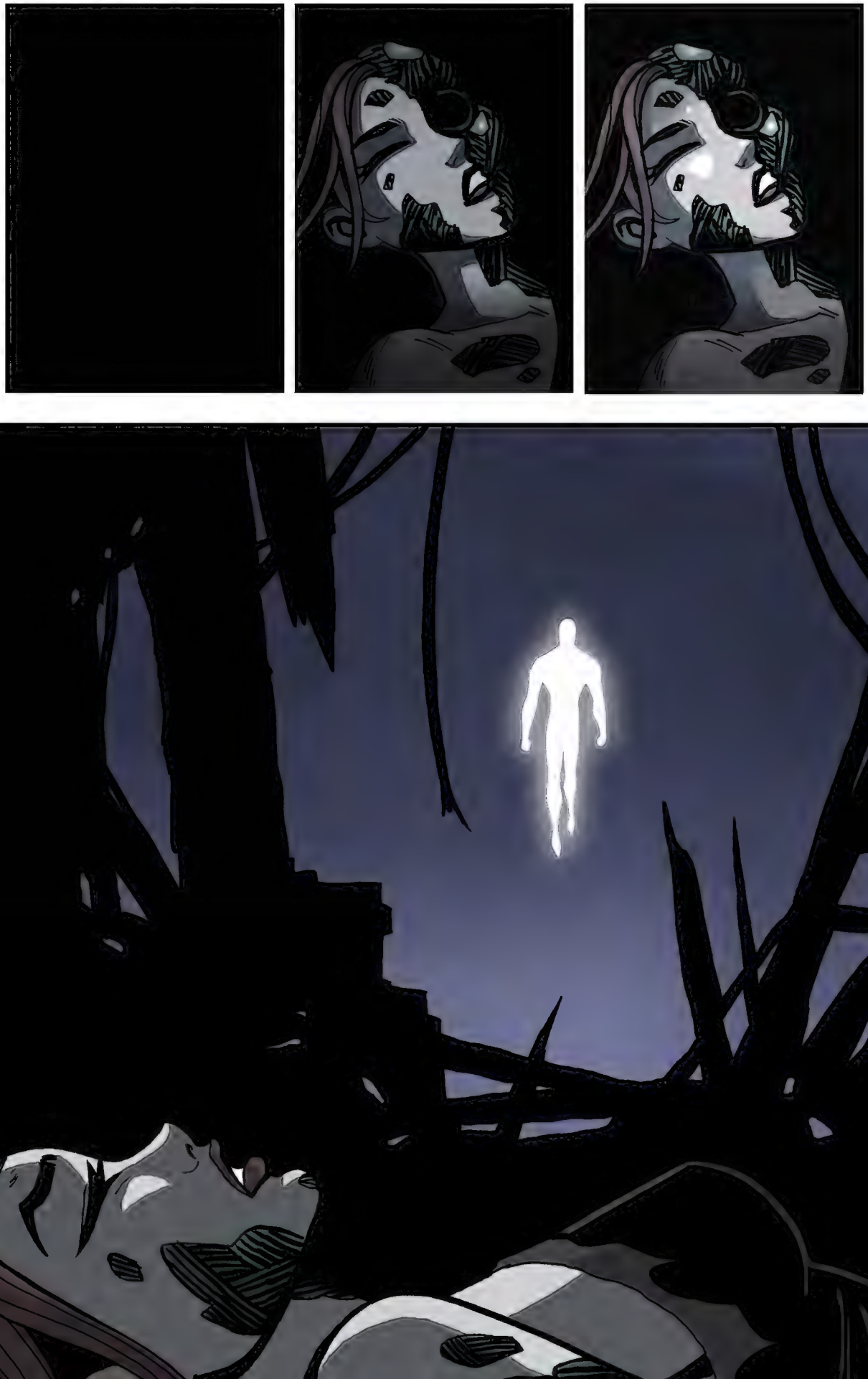
UH, YEAH. SURE! WHAT IS IT?
NARA...
NARA!

LONG HAVE I WATCHED YOU. TEMPTED YOU. TAKEN FROM YOU. CURSED YOU. YET STILL YOU REFUSE TO YIELD. WHY?
HE HAS ALL BUT ABANDONED YOU. BUT STILL YOU FIGHT. WHY?
WHY YOU? WHY ARE YOU GOD'S FAVORITE WHIPPING GIRL?
YOU.
ARE.
NOTHING!


YOU ARE BEATEN. BROKEN. THERE IS NO ONE LEFT TO SAVE YOU. THE FALL OF MAN IS COMPLETE. I WILL CONTINUE TO GAIN STRENGTH... AND THEN DEVOUR THIS WORLD.
NOW, DO YOU YIELD TO ME? DO YOU?!!
DO IT. JUST FINISH IT.
VERY WELL!

FROM NOTHING YOU ROSE TO NOTHING YOU RETURN. GOD'S BITCH IS DEAD!
CRASH!
MEL...
I'M... SORRY...

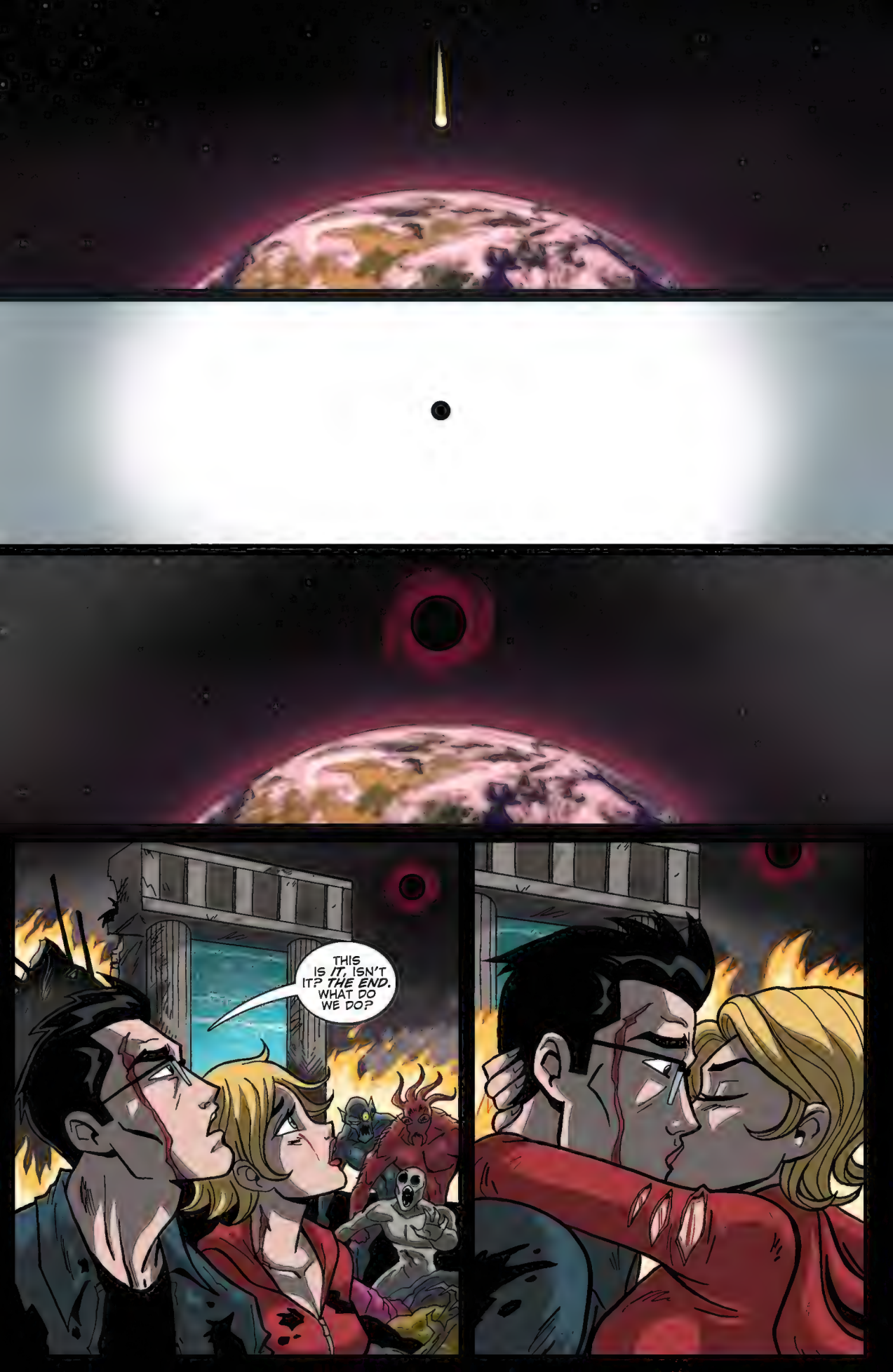
NARA, YOU'RE MY *BEST* FRIEND. *ALWAYS* HAVE BEEN.
NOTHING YOU COULD TELL ME WOULD *EVER* CHANGE THAT.
YOU'RE *NOT* ALONE. JUST *LET GO.* OF *EVERYTHING.*
IF THERE'S *ONE THING* I'M CERTAIN ABOUT, IT'S THAT THERE'S SOMETHING *SPECIAL* IN STORE FOR YOU, NARA KILDAY.
YOU'RE HERE *NOW.* THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS.
NARA! *NARA!* HOLD ON! I'M COMING FOR YOU!
NARA!
NARA!



...PITCH?
ZACHARY PITCH IS *DEAD*. I AM NOW *OPHIUCHUS* - THE SERPENT BEARER AND *13TH* OF THE ZODIAC.
YOU *SAVED* ME, NARA KILDAY. *NOW*, I RETURN THE FAVOR.
LET GEMINI *ARISE* AND BE WHOLE ONCE MORE.

THE AMPHITHEATER.
SHUK
CRUNCH
BLAM!

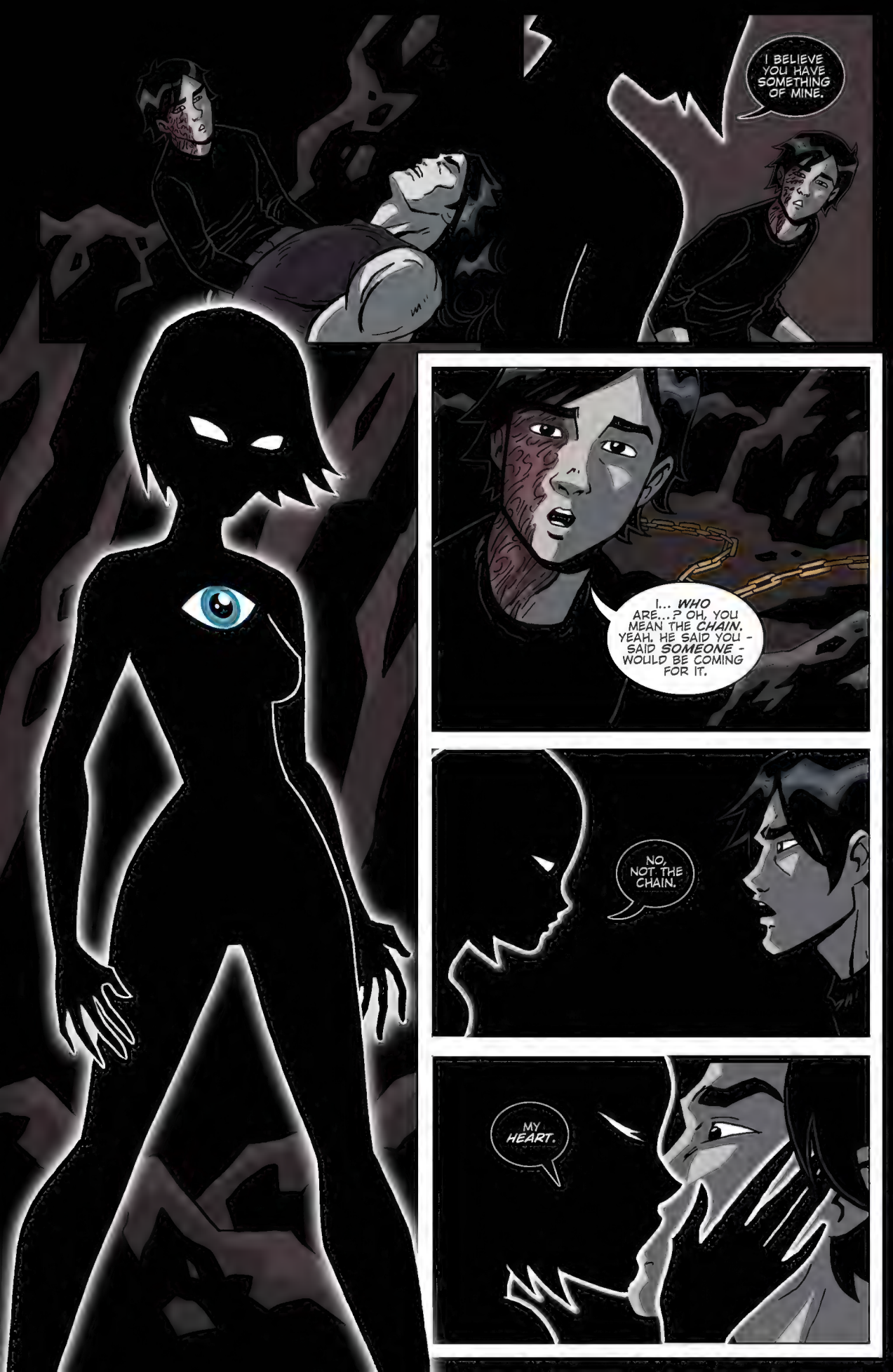
SOMEWHERE ABOVE EARTH.
CAPTAIN! ENEMY FIGHTERS HAVE PIERCED THE GRAVITY SHIELD!
THE STAR CORE IS IN IMMINENT DANGER OF COLLAPSE! WE MUST EJECT!
THIS CLOSE TO EARTH?! WE CAN'T!
WE HAVE NO CHOICE. OUR RESPONSIBILITY IS TO THE 10,000 SOULS WE'RE CARRYING. WE MUST DO WHAT WE CAN TO PRESERVE THE EQUINOX.
DO IT!

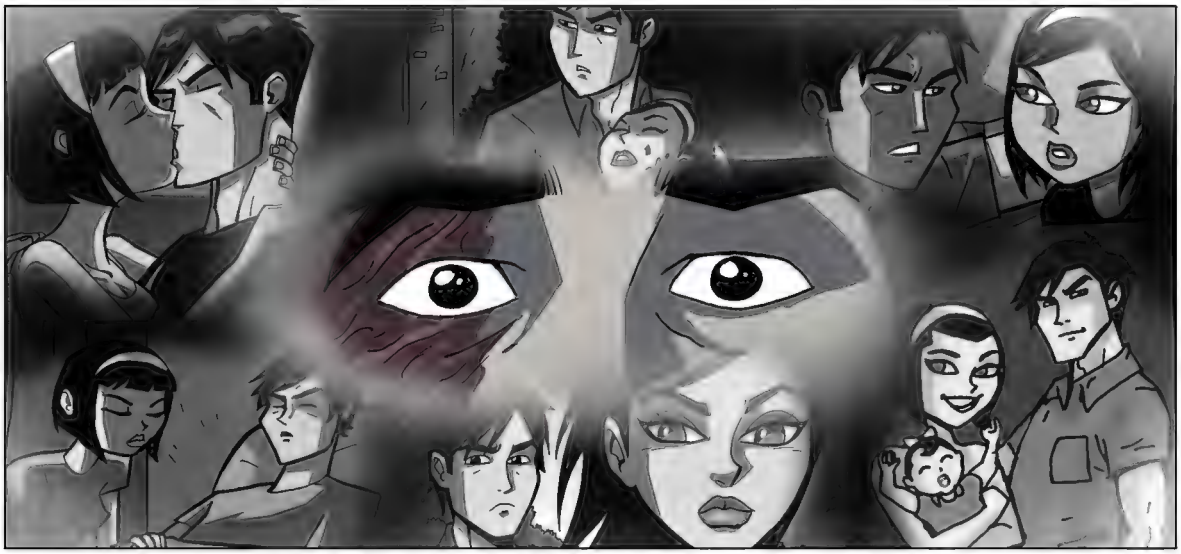

THIS IS *IT*, ISN'T IT? *THE END.* WHAT DO WE DO?

I AM WRATH. I AM ANNIHILATION! THE FALL OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND. I AM THE GOD OF THIS WORLD... AND THE ONE TO COME.
WHAT IS THIS??

CHAPTER 7

GOD HAVE MERCY.
I HATE JUST STANDING HERE, WATCHING THIS HAPPEN.
WE CAN'T INTERFERE. WE'VE ALL HAD OUR TIME. NOW IT'S UP TO THEM.
THIS IS MORE THAN ANY OF US HAS EVER HAD TO FACE.
WE ALL KNEW THIS DAY WAS COMING.
EVENTS MUST PLAY OUT AS THEY WILL.


I BELIEVE YOU HAVE SOMETHING OF MINE.
I... WHO ARE...? OH, YOU MEAN THE CHAIN. YEAH, HE SAID YOU - SAID SOMEONE - WOULD BE COMING FOR IT.
NO, NOT THE CHAIN.
MY HEART.

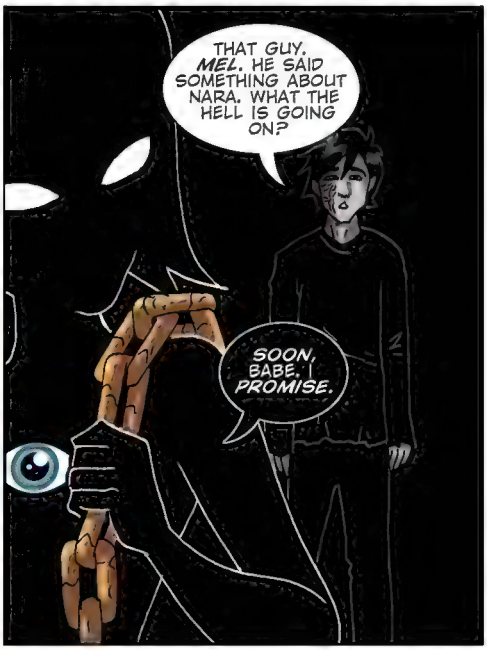


HELLO, ELIJAH.

HAZY! OH MY GOD. I'M... I WAS... I DON'T KNOW HOW TO EXPLAIN. I... I REMEMBER NOW. ARE YOU OKAY? WHAT ABOUT NYAH?

RELAX. YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH A LOT. WE ALL HAVE. WE'LL SIT AND FIGURE IT ALL OUT SOON ENOUGH.

BUT FOR NOW, I'VE GOT TO GET MOVING. ORDERS FROM THE BIG GUY UPSTAIRS.


THAT GUY, MEL. HE SAID SOMETHING ABOUT NARA. WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON?
SOON, BABE. I PROMISE.

CHEYENNE MOUNTAIN COMPLEX, COLORADO.
LOCK EVERYTHING DOWN. NO ONE GETS IN!
YES, MA'AM!
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
GENERAL FALCONE!
MR. PRESIDENT? SIR, YOU DON'T LOOK WELL. I HEARD ABOUT THE ATTACK -
SHUT UP AND LISTEN TO ME, GENERAL! UNLEASH OUR FULL MIGHT ON THE RESISTANCE!
I DON'T CARE WHAT IT TAKES OR WHO GETS IN THE WAY, I WANT YOU TO DESTROY EVERY LAST ONE OF THEM! IS THAT UNDERSTOOD?!

YES, SIR. IS THAT ALL, SIR?
NO... I'M UPLOADING THE NUCLEAR CODES TO YOU NOW. I WANT YOU TO LAUNCH EVERY-THING WE HAVE.
EVERYTHING? SIR, I DON'T UNDERSTAND. LAUNCH THEM WHERE?
UP! AT THE SKY! POINT THEM TO THE SKY! HE IS COMING! CAN'T YOU FEEL IT?
IT'S TOO LATE! HE'S ALREADY HERE!
SCREEEEECH!
WAIT- YOU AREN'T HIM. WHO ARE YOU?
THE ONE YOU ONCE CALLED SON.

I'M NOT DONE WITH YOU YET.
RUURRARR!
WHY WON'T YOU STAY DEAD? OH... I SEE NOW. THERE'S SOMETHING HERE THAT DOESN'T BELONG!

NO!

TELL YOUR GOD... I WON.
FINALLY! A WORTHY ADVERSARY!
OZRYEL! I KNEW YOUR UGLY FACE WOULD TURN UP SOONER OR LATER. YOU KNOW, OLD FRIEND, I NEVER UNDERSTOOD YOUR RELUCTANCE TO JOIN MY CAUSE. YOU NEVER REALLY SEEMED TO FIT IN WITH THE STUFFY UPSTAIRS CROWD.
I WAS NEVER YOUR FRIEND...
CHOMP
AH HAHA!
...AND I PREFER TO FIGHT FOR THE WINNING SIDE.

!
NOOOOOOOOO!!

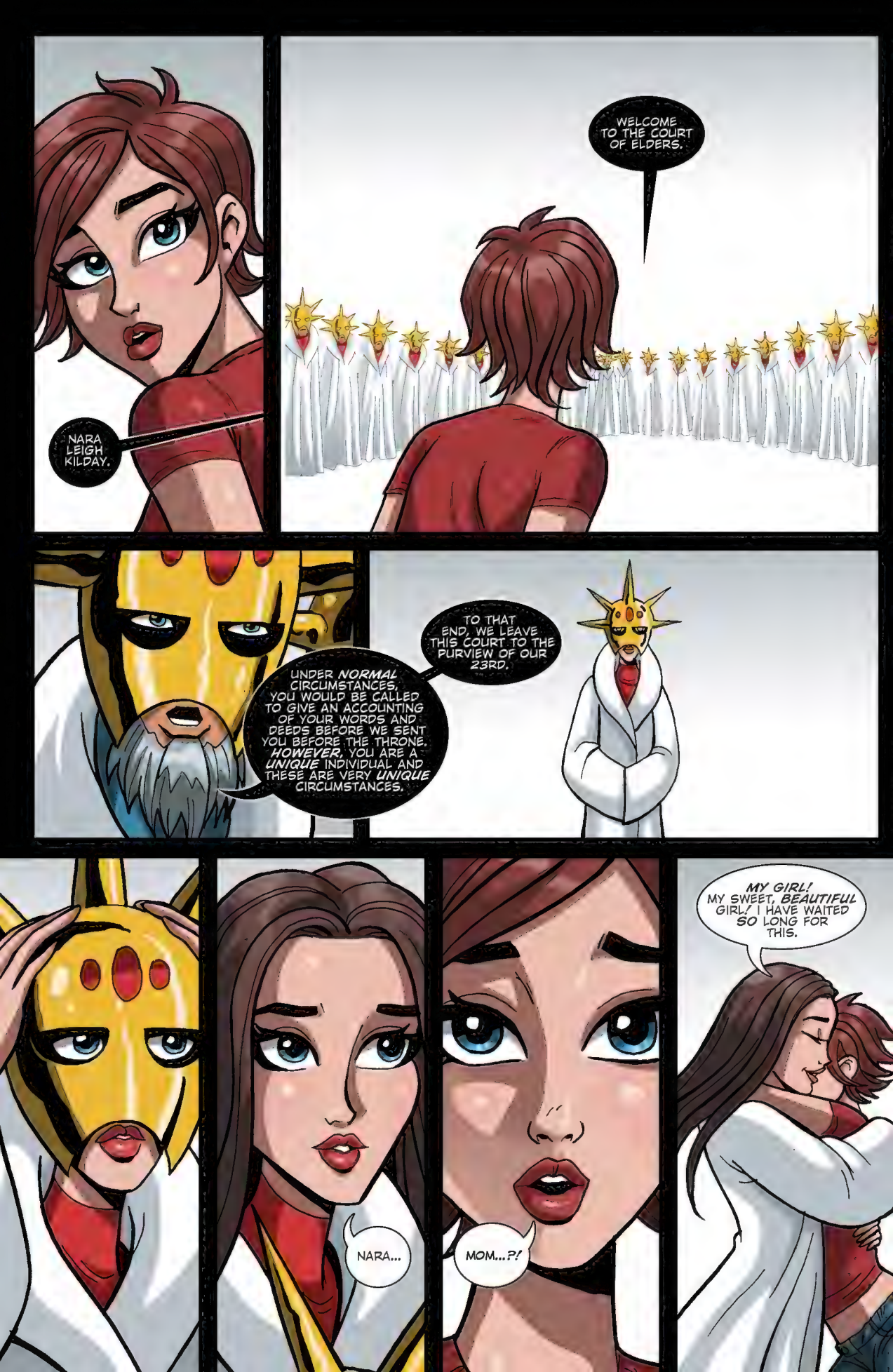
MR. ARNOLD- HE'S ALL YOURS!
GRRAAAWWRRRGGIII
AKK!
UUURRRGGG!

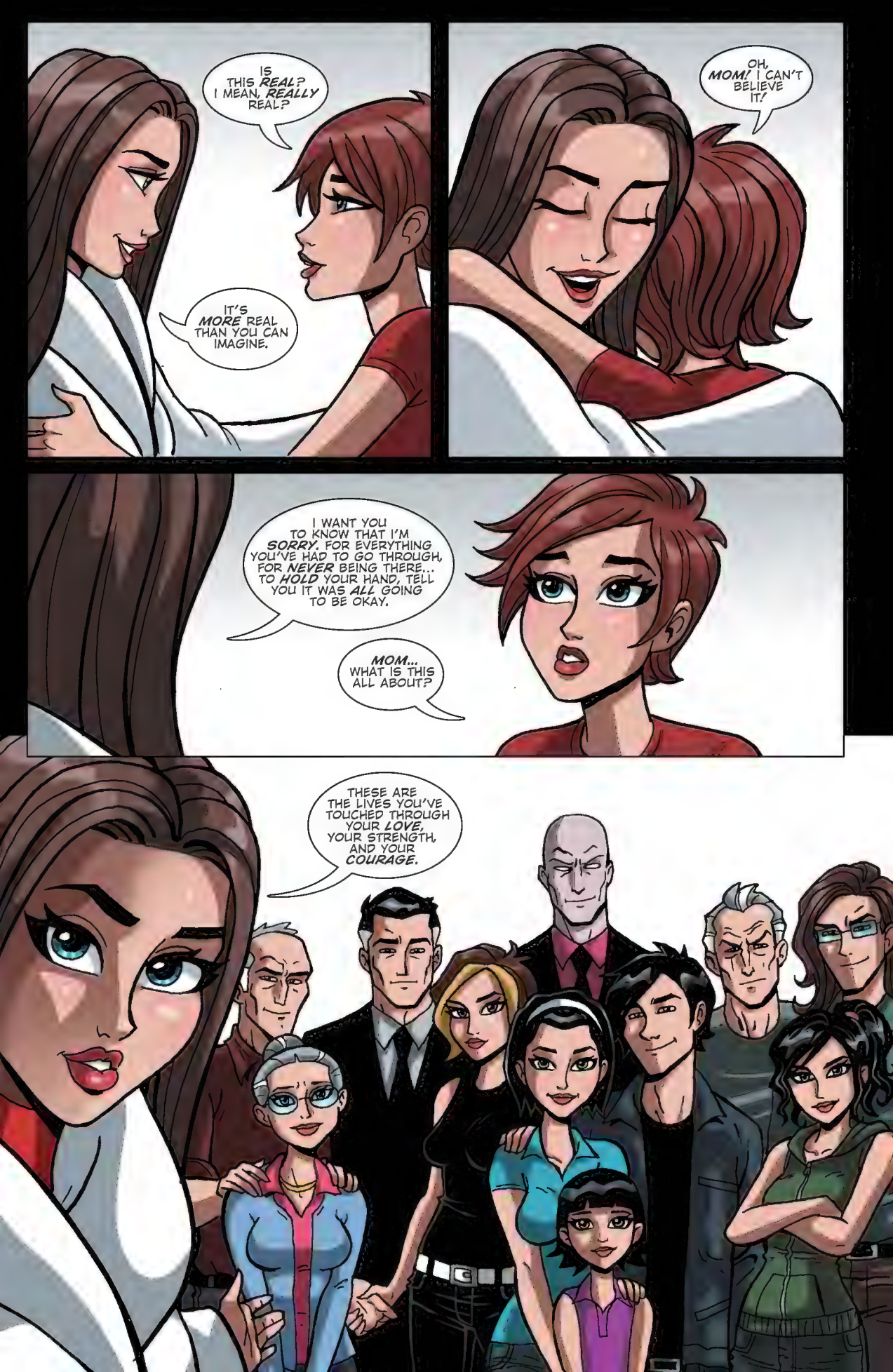
YOU STOLE MY FACE, MY NAME... USED THEM TO SPREAD EVIL AND MISERY. THE TORMENT... THE SUFFERING I ENDURED... ALL IN SERVICE TO YOUR TWISTED PRIDE AND HUBRIS!
PRIDE? HUBRIS? NO... I FOUGHT FOR WHAT I BELIEVED IN - FOR YOUR SAKE, FOR ALL OUR SAKES! THE KING IN HEAVEN IS A TYRANT AND I DEFIED HIM! I MADE A MOCKERY OF HIS PEOPLE AND HIS SO CALLED LOVE FOR THEM.
OH, I HEARD HIS CALLING - FELT HIS WEIGHT UPON MY HEART, HIS PLEA TO CAST OFF MY BURDENS AND FOLLOW HIM, TO ACCEPT HIS FORGIVENESS AND CALL HIM LORD. I HEARD HIS CALL AND I SAID NO! I SERVE NO ONE!
AND NOW HE'S GONE AND MADE YOU HIS. I'M ASHAMED TO CALL YOU MY SON!
YOUR PROBLEM, ZACHARY? YOU WERE WEAK! YOU NEVER STOOD FOR ANYTHING. SO I MADE YOU MY PUPPET!
ZACHARY! RELEASE HIM!

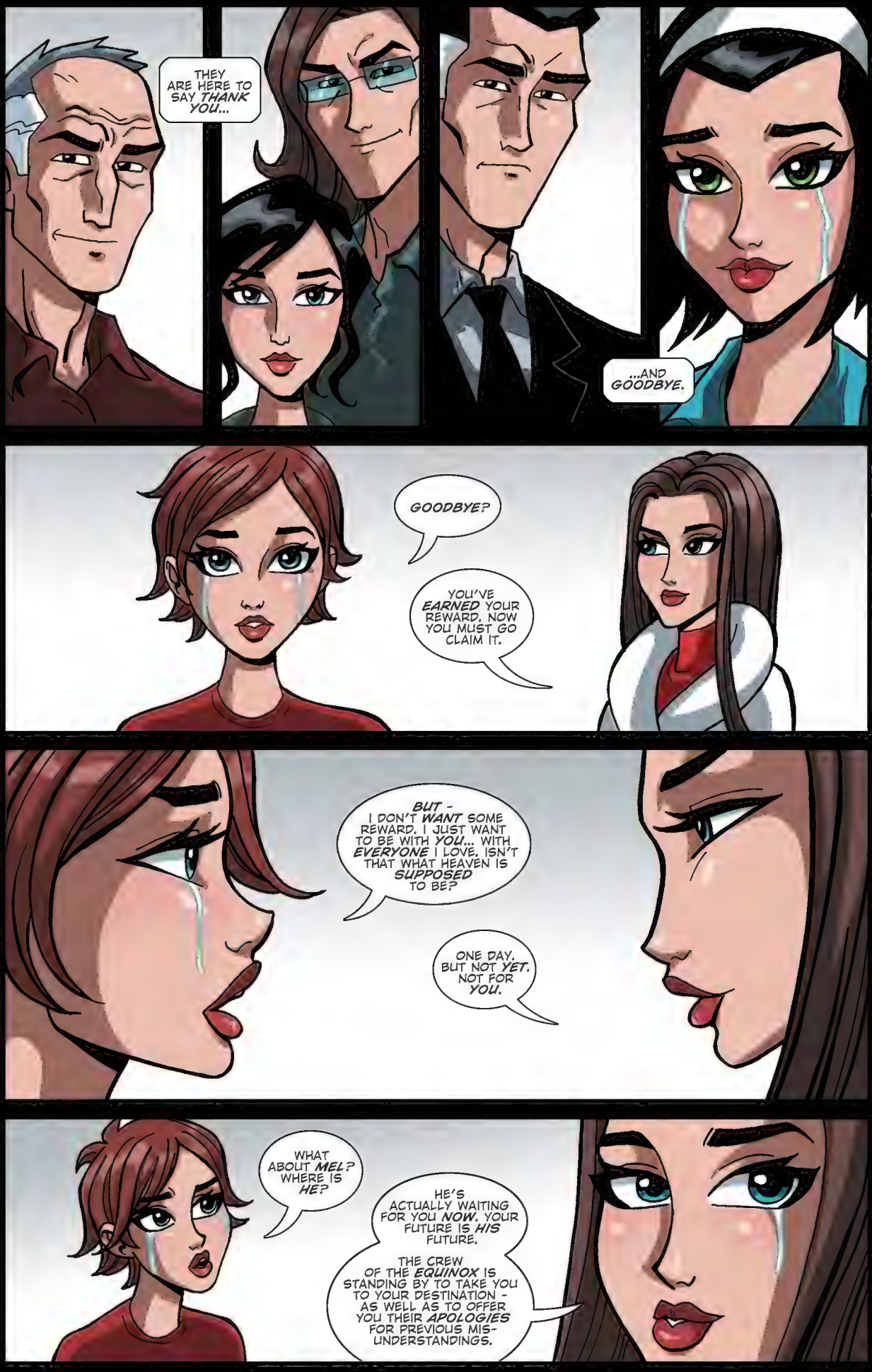
YOU HAVE BEEN REDEEMED, MY SON. THE FATHER YOU BELONG TO IS NOT OF EARTH, BUT OF HEAVEN. LOOK FOR RETRIBUTION NO MORE.
VENGEANCE...
...IS MINE.

DO IT! JUST BE DONE WITH IT ALREADY!
NO. NOT YET. BUT THAT DAY WILL COME. AND WHEN IT DOES, IT IS THE FATHER TO WHOM YOU WILL ANSWER. AND IF YOU CANNOT EVEN BEAR TO LOOK AT ME...
THEN THAT WILL BE A TERRIBLE DAY FOR YOU INDEED.

WELL DONE...
...GOOD AND FAITHFUL ONE.


NARA LEIGH KILDAY.
WELCOME TO THE COURT OF ELDERS.
UNDER *NORMAL* CIRCUMSTANCES, YOU WOULD BE CALLED TO GIVE AN ACCOUNTING OF YOUR WORDS AND DEEDS BEFORE WE SENT YOU BEFORE THE THRONE. *HOWEVER*, YOU ARE A *UNIQUE* INDIVIDUAL AND THESE ARE VERY *UNIQUE* CIRCUMSTANCES.
TO THAT END, WE LEAVE THIS COURT TO THE PURVIEW OF OUR 23RD.
NARA...
MOM...?!
MY GIRL! MY SWEET, *BEAUTIFUL* GIRL! I HAVE WAITED *SO* LONG FOR THIS.

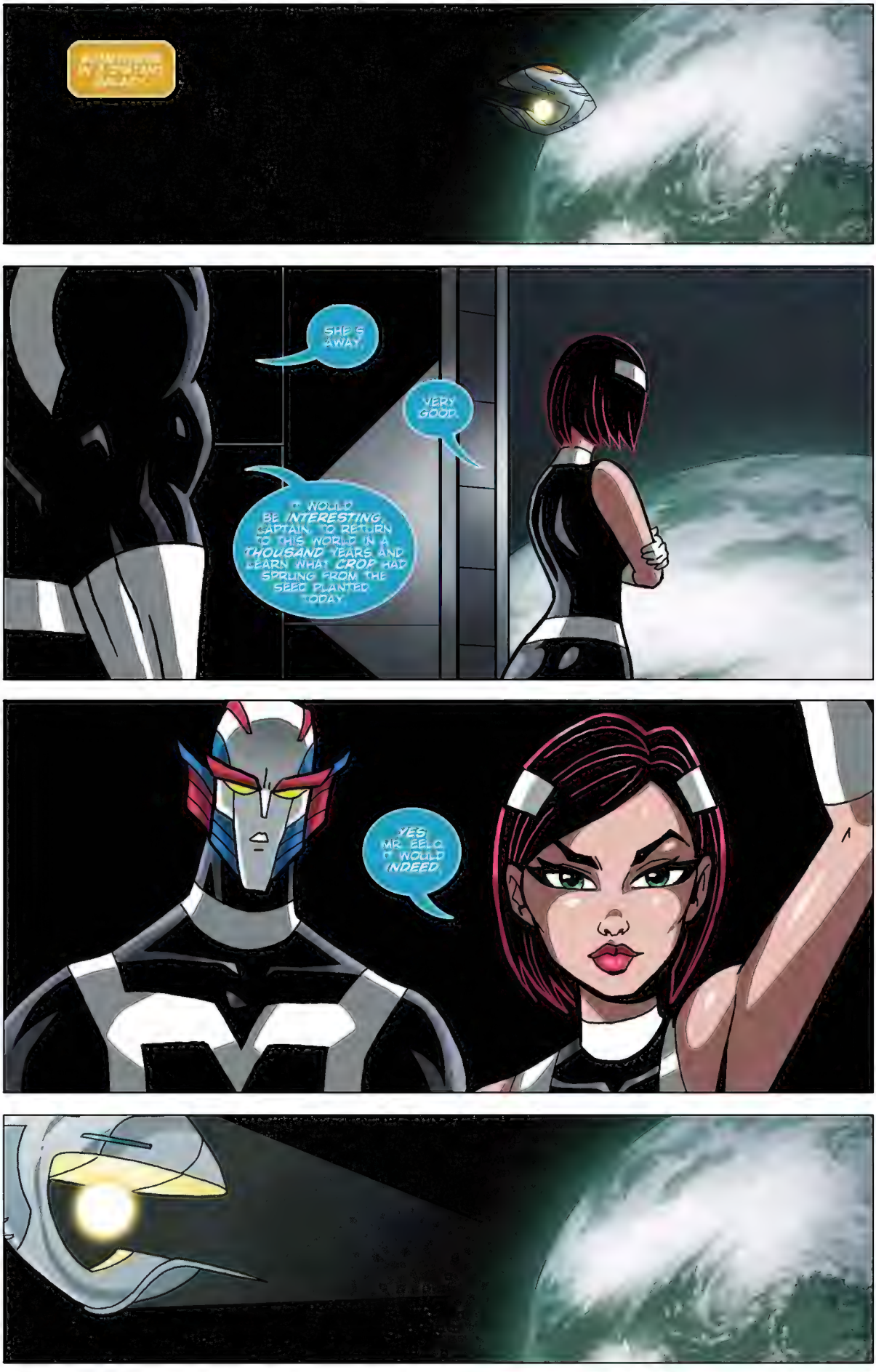

IS THIS REAL? I MEAN, REALLY REAL?
IT'S MORE REAL THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE.
OH, MOM! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT I'M SORRY. FOR EVERYTHING YOU'VE HAD TO GO THROUGH, FOR NEVER BEING THERE... TO HOLD YOUR HAND, TELL YOU IT WAS ALL GOING TO BE OKAY.
MOM... WHAT IS THIS ALL ABOUT?
THESE ARE THE LIVES YOU'VE TOUCHED THROUGH YOUR LOVE, YOUR STRENGTH, AND YOUR COURAGE.


THEY ARE HERE TO SAY *THANK YOU*...
...AND *GOODBYE*.
GOODBYE?
YOU'VE *EARNED* YOUR REWARD. NOW YOU MUST GO CLAIM IT.
BUT - I DON'T *WANT* SOME REWARD. I JUST WANT TO BE WITH *YOU*... WITH *EVERYONE* I LOVE. ISN'T THAT WHAT HEAVEN IS *SUPPOSED* TO BE?
ONE DAY. BUT NOT *YET*. NOT FOR *YOU*.
WHAT ABOUT *MEL*? WHERE IS *HE*?
HE'S ACTUALLY WAITING FOR YOU *NOW*. YOUR FUTURE IS *HIS* FUTURE.
THE CREW OF THE *EQUINOX* IS STANDING BY TO TAKE YOU TO YOUR DESTINATION - AS WELL AS TO OFFER YOU THEIR *APOLOGIES* FOR PREVIOUS MIS-UNDERSTANDINGS.

GOODBYE, NARA. NO TEARS. WE'LL BE TOGETHER AGAIN.
I PROMISE.
YOUR CHARIOT AWAITS.
WELL DONE, NARA.
I'M NOT EXACTLY SURE WHAT IT IS I ACCOMPLISHED. EVIL IS STILL OUT THERE. MILLIONS OF PEOPLE LOST THEIR SOULS TO A LIE. ANY GOOD I MAY HAVE DONE WAS IN SPITE OF MYSELF OR BECAUSE THERE WAS SOMEONE THERE TO PICK ME UP AND PUSH ME IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION.
YOU'RE NOT HERE BECAUSE YOU'RE PERFECT, NARA. YOU'RE HERE BECAUSE IN THE FACE OF EVERYTHING - THROUGH TRIAL AND DEATH AND ADVERSITY - YOU REMAINED FAITHFUL. YOU WEREN'T CALLED TO WIN THE WAR, ONLY TO STAND STRONG TIL THE END.
ALL OF HEAVEN MOURNS FOR THE LOST, BUT THE CHOICES THEY MADE WERE THEIR OWN. EVIL WILL BE DEALT WITH FULLY IN TIME. FOR NOW, IT IS TIME FOR YOU TO REST... AND TO LIVE.
JUST PROMISE ME ONE THING, WOMAN TO WOMAN - DON'T MESS THIS UP.

THE BEAST AND HIS PROPHET *BURN* IN THE LAKE OF FIRE. LUCIFER IS *BOUND*, LOCKED IN THE ABYSS. BUT EARTH *REMAINS* IN CRISIS.
YOU WILL *DWELL* WITH THEM, COMFORT THEM, AND *LEAD* THEM. WITH *YOU*, THEY WILL KNOW *PEACE*.
FOR A *TIME*...
THEN THE *CHAINED ONE* WILL BE LOOSED TO FACE ME. I WILL DELIVER MY *JUDGMENT*, AND HEAVEN AND EARTH WILL BE MADE *NEW*.
THUS SAYETH THE LORD.
AMEN.

DO YOU HAVE IT?


SHE'S AWAY.
VERY GOOD.
IT WOULD BE INTERESTING, CAPTAIN, TO RETURN TO THIS WORLD IN A THOUSAND YEARS AND LEARN WHAT CROP HAD SPRUNG FROM THE SEED PLANTED TODAY.
YES, MR. SELO. IT WOULD INDEED.

MEMORY
2003
N.K.

Here we are. The last page.

Today's my birthday. This diary was a gift from my parents. They said it would help me focus my thoughts, or discover my passions or something. Anyway, as crazy as it sounds, I'm starting here, at the END. The first blank page of anything is always ominous and intimidating. And I've always believed that it's easier to start something if you know where you're going. But most of all, I HATE being let down by a bad ending. So I figured, why not just write my own? So here goes.

WOW! What a ride, huh? Knowing me, I can't help but think I made a LOT of mistakes along the way. Turning left when I should have gone right, looking back instead of going forward. As hard as it is, I'll try not to focus on all that. Instead, I'm going to celebrate all the GOOD things. The incredible journey. The adventure. New friends gained and enemies conquered. I hope I always told the truth, was honest with myself and others, and stayed true to my beliefs. And mom, dad - I hope I made you guys proud.

I've been thinking a lot about something Hazy asked me the other day. "If God is real," she said, "why does He let so many bad things happen? How can we even know if He's responsible for all the good things?"

I told her I didn't know. But maybe life, as we experience it, is a big, scary, uncertain mess, full of big tragedies and small triumphs. And it's only at the end, when looking back, that we can see that it was all in fact an amazing tapestry, woven by God with great love and care, our each step guided and prepared for. Maybe then, all the bad things will seem that much smaller and the good things that much bigger. At least, that's what I'd like to think.

Anyway, that's all I've got. This has been the life of Nara Kilday.

Signing off,

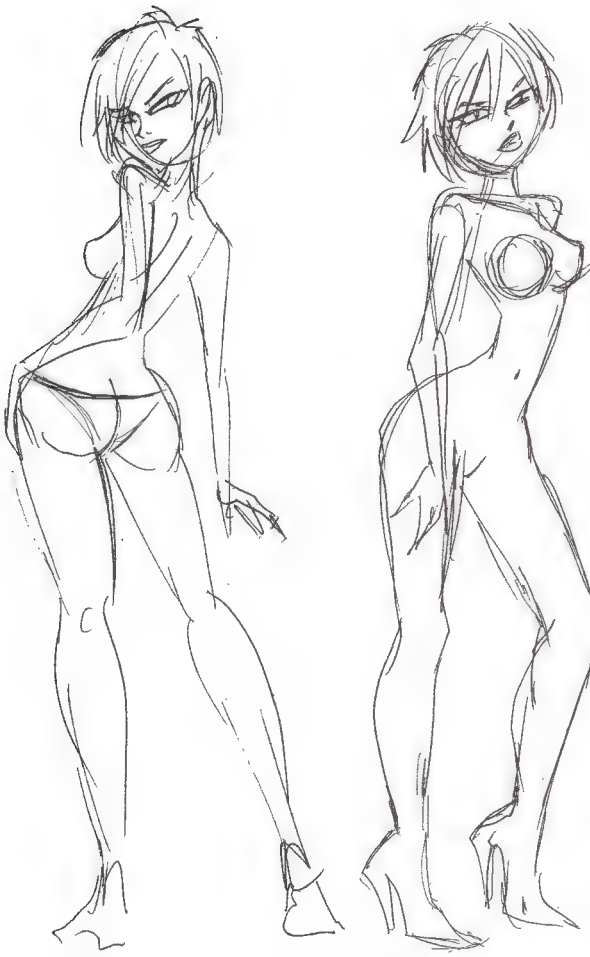
N.K.

49 covers 33 issues 12 years 7 series 1 story

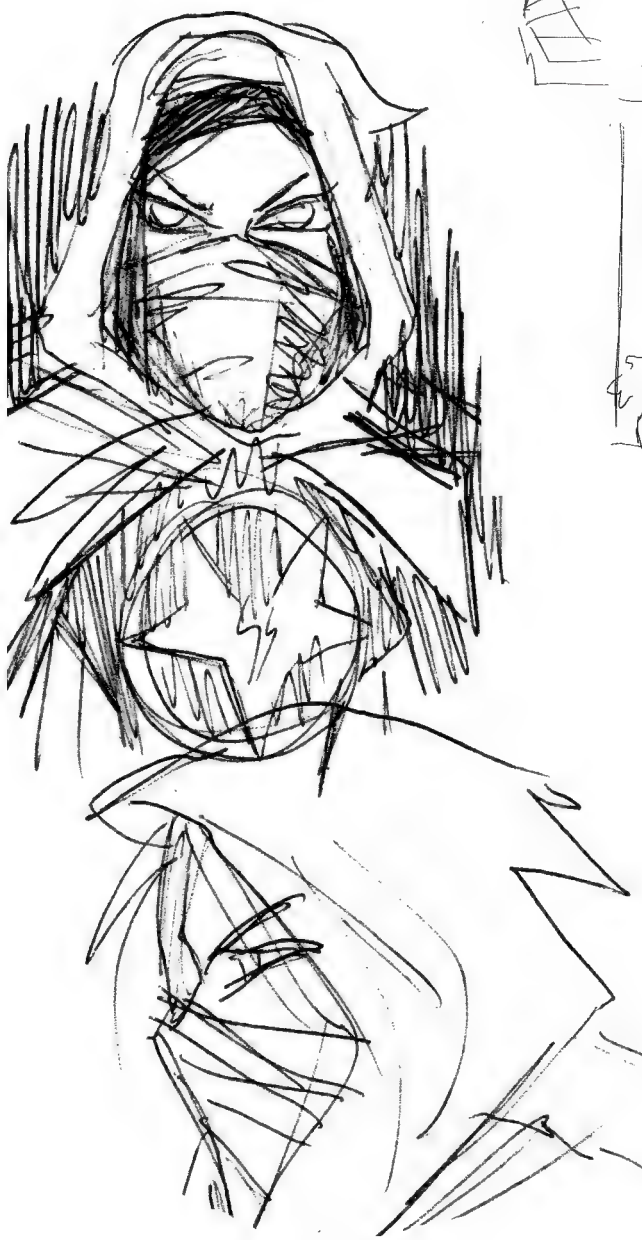
DEAD@17:
a history

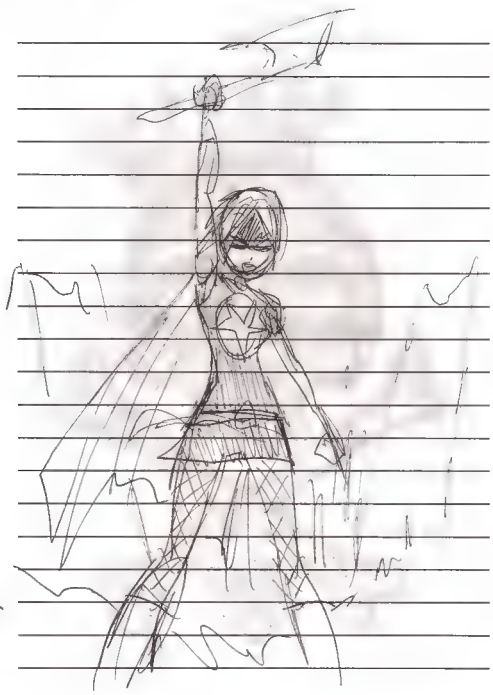
the evolution of
nara

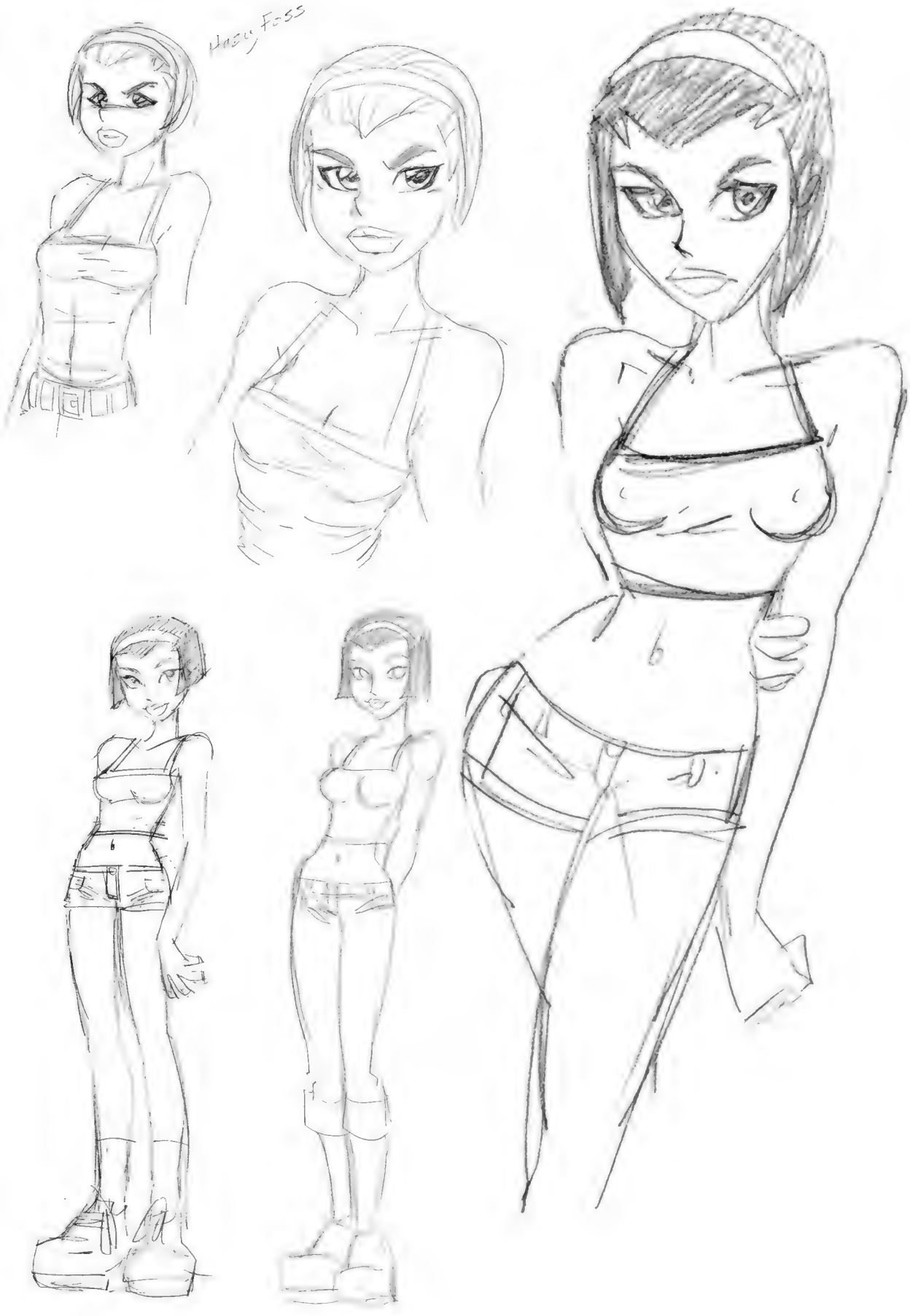
DEAD 17
series 2

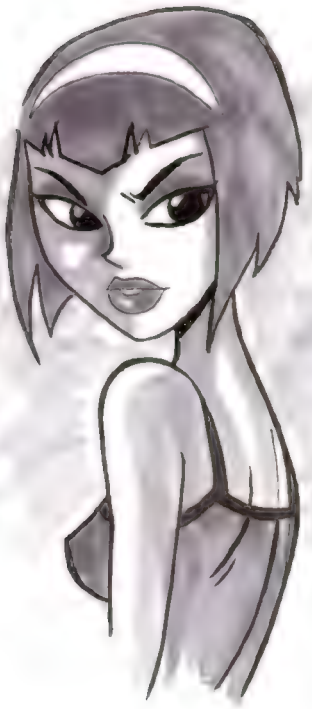


NARA





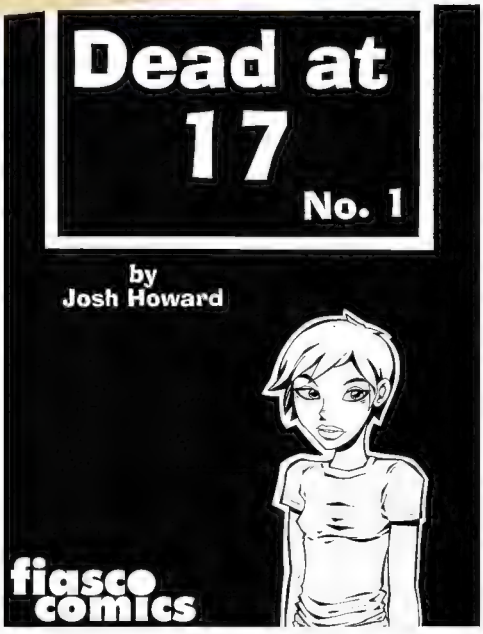

Mary Foss



the evolution of
hazy

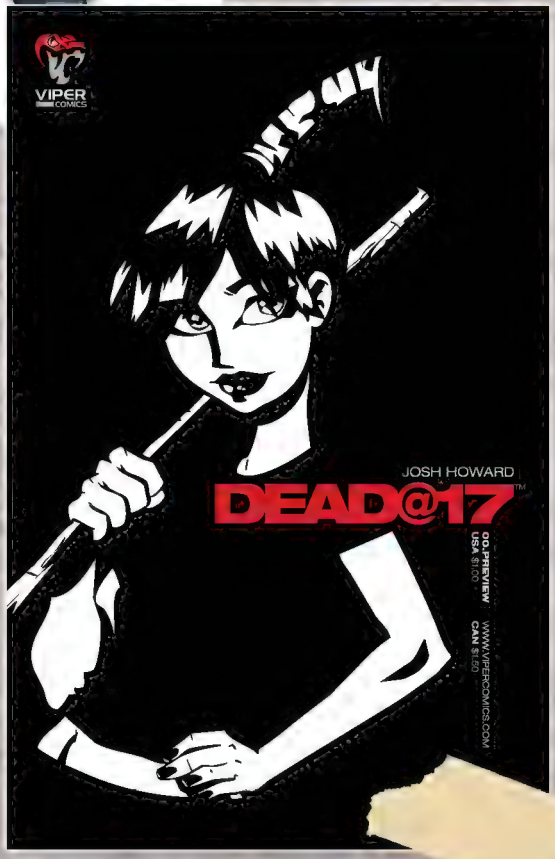
the evolution of
violet

the Beginning



Drawn over the course of a year during my down time working at a local comic shop, this black and white mini-comic was the very first version of DEAD@17. I printed them up at a Kinko's, gave them out to a few friends and customers, and moved on. But just a couple of years later, it would get noticed by local upstart publisher Viper Comics and the rest is history.

the Promotion



ABOVE: The very first promotional ad. The original release date was scheduled for summer before being moved to November.

TOP RIGHT: Art from the first convention banner, Orlando Mega-Con Feb. 2003, ten months before the release of issue 1.

RIGHT: 5 page preview issue, given out at San Diego Comic Con, July 2003.

OPPOSITE PAGE: Promo poster sent to comic shops to promote issue #1.

JOSH HOWARD'S

DEAD @17

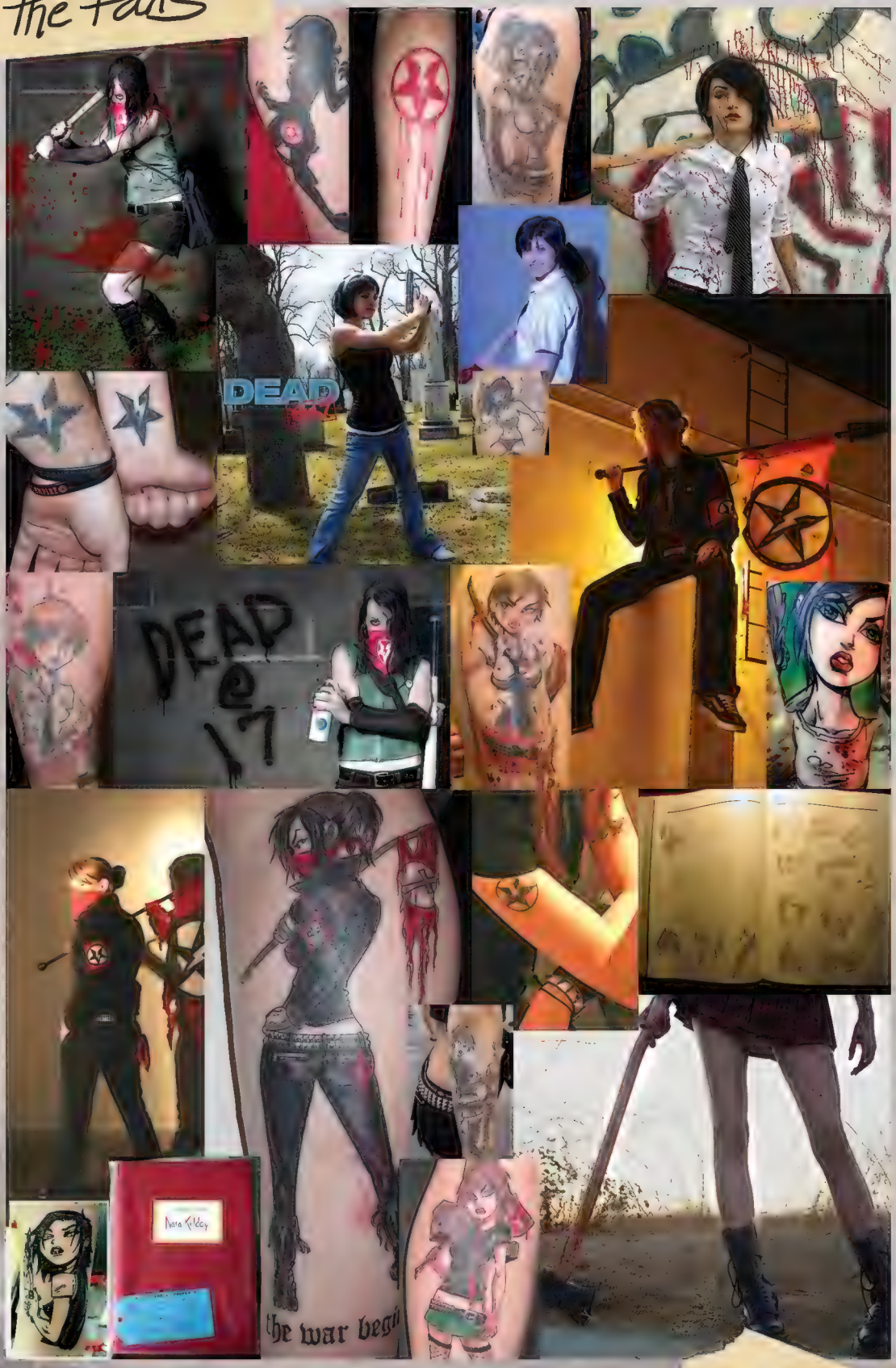
ISSUE 01

IN STORES

NOVEMBER 2003

the Journey

the Fans



the Press

SPOTLIGHT ON

DEAD @ 17 #1
by Josh Howard & Jim Resnowski
Something sinister is emerging in the small suburb of Darlington Hills. At the center of it are Nara Kilday and Hazy Foss, your average teenage girls. The best of friends, they share a unique bond. But when tragedy strikes, a dark secret is revealed that will change their world forever.
MATURE READERS
FC, 32pg (1 of 4) .. $2.95

DEAD@17
#01 04
The ultimate battle between good and evil is about to be fought in the most unlikely of places, and the outcome will depend on the choices of one teenage girl. In the small suburb of Darlington Hills, two friends, Nara Kilday and Hazy Foss, are about to be caught in the middle of a conflict that will change their lives forever. Dead @ 17 is a four issue mini-series about friendship, love, loss, destiny, and betrayal, and the choices one must make in the face of ultimate adversity.

DOA: ***Dead @ 17 #1,*** the debut offering from Viper Comics (*CSN* gave you an advance heads-up a couple of months ago on this well-crafted horror series, remember?...), has totally sold out, and #2 is soon to follow that successful path. "Since the release of issue #1, we've filled several purchase re-orders, none of us at Viper anticipated such a response to our debut title," *Jessie Garza,* Viper Comics President, said. ***Dead @ 17 #3*** is slated for release at about the same time that this issue of ***CSN*** reaches comic shops, so don't miss it!

DEAD@17 VOL 1 TP *(Viper MAR042861 $14.95)*
Josh Howard rocketed from nowhere to sellout status with this tale of a teen hero who faces death... and loses! All four parts are long since sold out, with some commanding big bucks—but you can get the whole package for a very affordable price.

THE "THIS ONE'LL KILL YA" AWARD

DEAD @17

Remember the rule of thumb that new publishers have to pay their dues and struggle their way through several unprofitable, poorly received books before they find their first hit? Well, the folks at Viper Comics apparently don't! An intelligent teen slasher-horror film seems to be a contradiction in terms—which must be why the Viper folks made it a comic book instead.

DEAD @17: BLOOD OF SAINTS #1

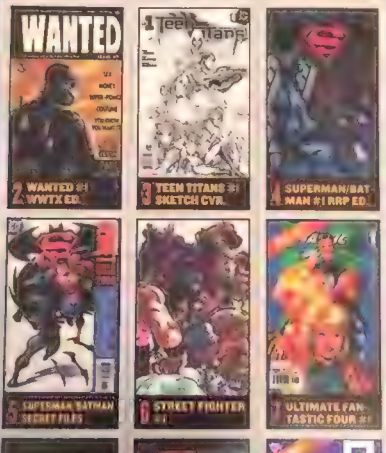
JOSH HOWARD (W/A)
(Viper FEB042714 $2.95)

WHAT'S THE SCOOP?
Viper Comics' sleeper hit continues with a new horror-adventure series continuing the tale of Nara Kilday, a seventeen-year-old whose life—or should we say "death"?—has become a real horror-show!

WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?
Howard's deceptively simple animation-inspired art is so innocently appealing that it's hard to believe that this is one of the most thought-provoking character-driven horror tales in years, ranking right up there with *Steve Niles'* work.

HOT 10 COMICS

COMBINING THE LAST WOLVERINE story with convention exclusives is like storing greasy newspapers in a match factory. Debuting at No. 1 last month *Wolverine: The End* #1 (Wizard World Texas edition) remains bolted to first place. The aptly named *Wanted* leaps from No. 10 to nip at Wolverine's heels (don't try that at home, kids). It wouldn't be a Hot 10 without a variant of *Teen Titans* #1. *Ultimate FF* makes itself at home at No. 7. Any title that begins with S? That stands for "same spot," except *Superman/Batman* #1, which "slips" one. *1602*, sadly, does not count and falls four rungs. Now everybody wave to newcomer *Dead @ 17!*



secretstash comics' hidden ger

DEAD@17: BLOOD OF SAINT

If Buffy the Vampire Slayer woke up to 'Dawn of the Dead,' the blistering zombie annihilation couldn't compare to this monster-stomping romp

THE DIRT After teenage schoolgirl Nara Kilday was resurrected to fight against the waves of zombies munching on the residents of her small town in the first *Dead@17* mini, the fight against the undead is far from over as the four-issue *Blood of Saints* rips open a new, horrific chapter in her afterlife.

DOYA LIKE? If you're terrified by the lightning-fast zombies of freaky flicks like "28 Days Later" and "Dawn of the Dead," then fear not this mini: *Dead@17*'s relentless Nara kicks their putrid posteriors up and down the block like Buffy in bee-yotch mode.

DIDJA KNOW? The first *Dead@17* mini disappeared from comic shop shelves faster than silver bullets during a werewolf invasion. Complete sets of the four-issue series have fetched as much as $65 online, making it one of the hottest back-market indie series ever!

WRITER & ARTIST JOSH HOWARD
PUBLISHER VIPER COMICS

Seeing hot, axe-wielding teens in schoolgirl outfits chopping zombies into pieces may be a fanboy's dream, but for the heroines of *Dead@17*, it's a nightmare!

As much as Nara Kilday would like to believe her horrible evisceration was a just a lurid nightmare, the blood she finds caked on her schoolgirl outfit after waking in front of her own grave tells her it was all too real. Even before her best friend Hazy can come to grips with her shocking demise, Nara is resurrected by a higher power and reunites with her friend just in time to decapitate a squad of zombies storming Hazy's house. The second four-issue installment of writer/artist Josh Howard's series from Viper Comics, *Blood of Saints* (#2 of which is out now), picks up three months after the hottie heroines win their battle against the demon Bolabogg, who tried to lure Nara to the dark side and join his army of the undead

"Nara is not a chosen one, exactly; more like one of many chosen," clarifies Howard. "She was resurrected, along with others, for the ultimate purpose of fighting evil. However, she has a choice over the path she chooses. The villains, knowing her potential, sought to convert her to their side—they didn't succeed."

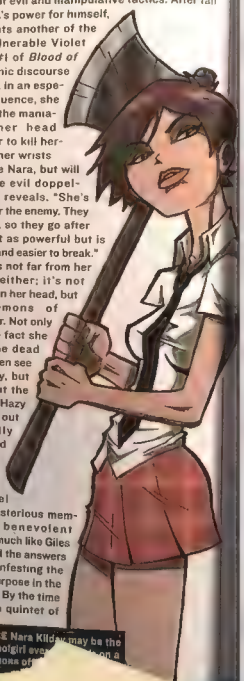
Howard's adroit juggling of character development, humor and horrific action is reminiscent of Joss Whedon's "Buffy the Vampire Slayer," yet the creator admits he's never actually seen the hit TV series.

"For the record, I've never seen an episode of 'Buffy,' ever," notes Howard. "'X-Files,' 'Twin Peaks' and 'Lord of the Rings' are all big influences. If you imagine Nara and Hazy as Frodo and Sam, you'll begin to see a lot of similarities."

The dynamic between Nara and Hazy is indeed Hobbit-esque (with less hairy feet) as the inseparable companions blaze into a full-on war with the evil Bolabogg, who is not unlike Sauron in his omnipresent evil and manipulative tactics. After failing to usurp Nara's power for himself, Bolabogg torments another of the chosen—the vulnerable Violet Grey—in issue #1 of *Blood of Saints*. His demonic discourse plagues her until, in an especially chilling sequence, she finally relents to the maniacal voice in her head screaming for her to kill herself and slashes her wrists

"[Violet] is like Nara, but will end up being the evil doppelganger," Howard reveals. "She's basically plan B for the enemy. They couldn't get Nara, so they go after Violet, who is just as powerful but is more weak-willed and easier to break."

Nara herself is not far from her breaking point, either; it's not because of devils in her head, but rather the demons of jealousy and anger. Not only must she hide the fact she returned from the dead and is unable to even see her beloved family, but she soon finds out the "other friend" that Hazy has been hanging out with is actually Elijah, Nara's old love interest! Compounding that frustration is the absence of Noel Raddemer, the mysterious member of the benevolent Protectorate who, much like Giles in "Buffy," knows all the answers about the ghouls infesting the town and Nara's purpose in the fight against them. By the time she stumbles on a quintet of



AXE OF VENGEANCE Nara Kilday may be the hottest undead schoolgirl ever on a mission to keep demons of

MORE BEST BETS

DEAD@17: BLOOD OF SAINTS #1 (Viper Comics) $2.95
Why anyone was surprised the first *Dead@17* series, starring a murdered and resurrected 17-year-old, was an indie hit is beyond us. Any book starring both a cute teenage girl in a frisky Catholic schoolgirl outfit and a bunch of flesh-eating zombies is money in the bank. Come on, what more do you want out of a comic? Nara and Hazy are back in this new four-issue mini-series from creator Josh Howard and Viper Comics, which will surely bring a heaping helping of monsters and mayhem.

FLESH & BLOOD
TAPPING THE CREATIVE VEIN

ONE MAN ARMY

JOSH HOWARD'S DOING IT ALL ON THE BREAKOUT HIT *DEAD@17* By Jim Catapano

What do you get when you mix bloodthirsty zombies, teen angst and schoolgirl outfits? An unstoppable indie juggernaut in 2005.

1 DEAD@17

Never before has the icy cold grip of death felt so smokin' hot.

And we're not just talking about those frisky Catholic schoolgirl outfit-wearing stars of Josh Howard's indie breakout sensation *Dead@17* from Viper Comics. Fans love Howard's three *Dead@17* mini-series—*Dead@17* (2002-03), *Dead@17: Blood of Saints* (2004) and *Dead@17: Revolution* (2004-05)—and buzz has been building exponentially. There's no doubt that 2005 is the year Howard breaks out in a big way.

That's a far cry from just a few years ago in 2002 when Howard, toiling as an office temp and manning a comic shop counter, was rejected by nearly every comic publisher around.

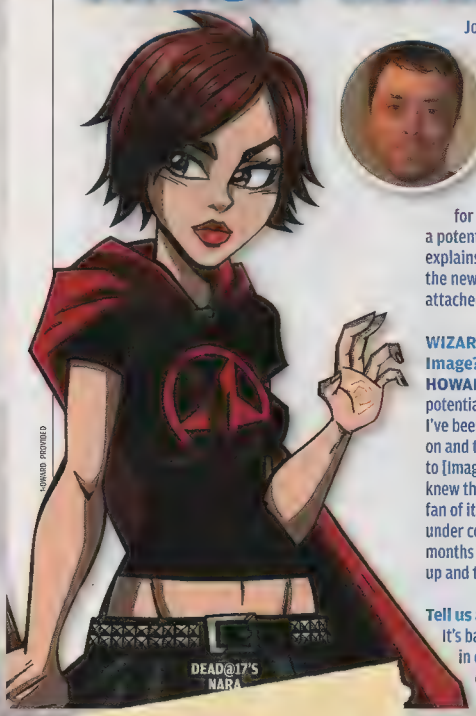
"I'd been sending submissions to everyone under the sun, but I'd gotten no reply," says the 28-year-old Howard. "So I finally said, I'm just going to do it myself and I put together one complete issue that ultimately got me the job at Viper.

"I submitted *Dead@17* to Antarctic Press back then and they were thinking of picking it up but then at the last minute they decided not to," Howard continues. "And then I saw them at a convention about a year later and they were kicking themselves. It was pretty funny, but they're good guys."

If you don't know anything about *Dead@17* you've probably only recently come out of a year-long coma (congrats on the recovery!), so here's the scoop: Everything starts after the main character gets killed. Perky schoolgirl Nara Kilday is murdered and then is resurrected to fight evil. From there it's typical teenager stuff like hacking

trade show

'DEAD@17' moves to Image...and theaters?



Josh Howard's indie smash *Dead@17* has amassed a huge cult following over the past five years at Viper Comics. The title follows Nara Kilday, a girl whose death and subsequent resurrection kicks off a series of events that may lead to doomsday. In June, *Dead@17* makes the jump to Image Comics with a new, massive *Ultimate Collection* set for May 13 release ($24.99)—not to mention a potential feature film on the way. Here, Howard explains the move to Image, what's coming up in the new mini and reveals some surprising names attached to the movie.

WIZARD: What precipitated the move to Image?
HOWARD: I kind of felt that I had reached my potential with Viper. I had been there a while and I've been loyal. But I figured it was time to move on and try to reach a bigger audience. I had spoken to [Image Publisher] Eric Stevenson in the past. I knew that he was interested in the book and was a fan of it, but at the time that we spoke, I was still under contract with Viper. I e-mailed him several months ago to let him know that my contract was up and to see if I was still welcome to come over.

Tell us about the *Dead@17: Ultimate Edition*.
It's basically going to be all four previous series in one volume. For anyone who wants to come on board, the whole story is in there. It's the first time that *Dead@17* has been printed at full comic book size.

What's happening in the new series?
It's three years after the last series, and in a sense, even though things on Earth are getting really bad, it's probably the most normal things have been for Nara and [best friend] Hazy in a long time. It's actually the first time they've been together since "Blood of Saints," and they're just living normal lives. At the same time, things are slowly spiraling out of control. And Pitch is working in the background. He's got a new thing going on. [Nara] has been using a disguise and living under an assumed name, but she ultimately gets exposed.

You've hinted before that Earth is cut off from Heaven in this series. Can you elaborate?
Heaven had a kind of tether to Earth that kept things in check. That's now been severed. So Earth is falling into Heli's dimension. They have no way of getting out from the other side, so things are getting worse and worse.

What's the status of the *Dead@17* movie?
As of right now, Lorenzo di Bonaventura is producing, Michael Dougherty ("X2") is going to be writing the script and he's working on a treatment right now. And Vanessa Hudgens ("High School Musical") has been approached to star in it. That's all I know, for now. • **BLAIR MARNELL**

the Artists

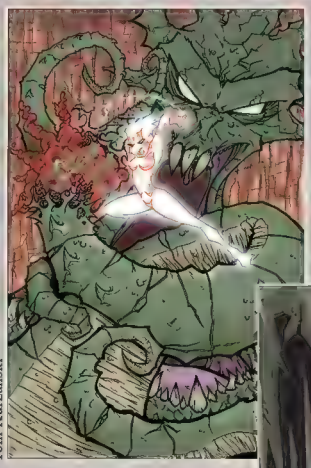
Sean Stephe

Martin Abel

Sean Stephens

Ben Hall

Guy Lemay



Tom Kurzanski

Scotty Law

Bryan Baugh

Grant Gould

Christian Slade

Charles Holbert

NARA

Otis Frampton

Jessica Hickman

Anthony Coffey

Bryan Baugh

Cal Slayton

Ben Hall
DEAD@17

JD Bram
R.I.P.

Bryan Baugh

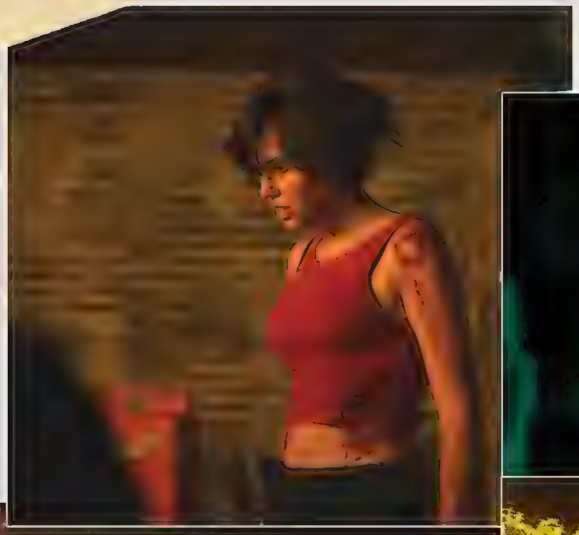
DEAD@17

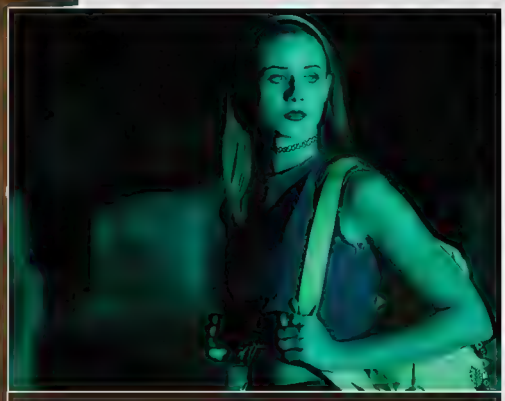
DEAD@17
Ben Hall

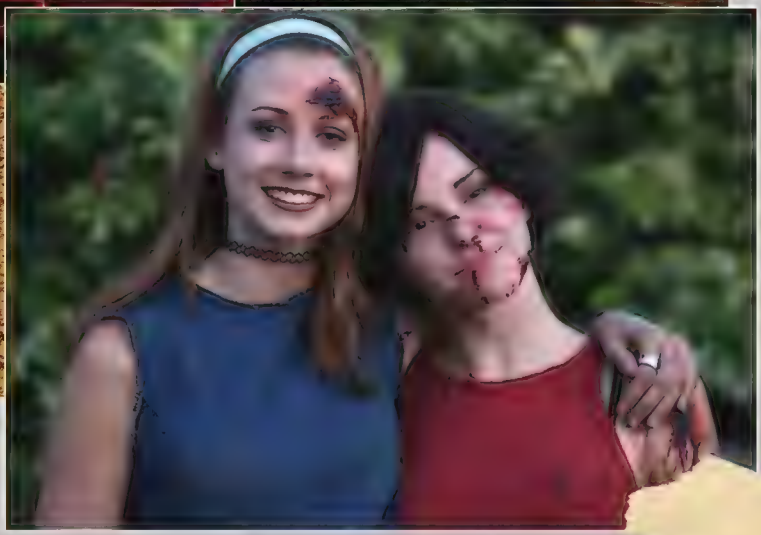
the future

As one version of the story comes to a close, another is about to begin! This year **DEAD@17** went before cameras as an official short film production from **POPBOOM** to be released Winter 2015/16. Directed by **Jack Heller**, and produced by Heller along with **Greg Zuk**, **Alexander Koht**, and **Daniel Alter**, the short stars **CC WESKE** and **LUCY FREYER**, and aims to keep Nara and Hazy alive through many future multimedia adventures.

Behind the scenes of *DEAD@17*, coming soon to POPBOOM.COM!







Lucy Freyer as HAZY and CC Weske as NARA.

thanks

My eternal gratitude to:

Laura, for her endless strength, love, and support.

My amazing kids - Luke, London, & Willow

My incredible parents & grandparents, who always believed

All my friends, old and new, who have encouraged critiqued, and inspired

Jessie Garza and the Viper gang for giving me a shot when no one else would

Eric Stephenson and Image Comics for allowing me to see this story through to the end

Daniel Alter, Jack Heller, and POPBOOM for taking it to the next level

And finally, to all my fans, past and present, who have bought, supported, shared, posted, blogged, reviewed, tweeted, or contributed in any way to making Dead@17 the success that it is and allowing me to do what I love for a living. Thank you.

All praise, glory, and honor to Christ Jesus.

about the creator

Josh Howard has been creating comics professionally since 2003 with the debut of the first issue of DEAD@17 from small indie publisher Viper Comics. The breakout success of the series allowed Josh to make the leap to Image Comics in 2009. He went on to produce several more series at Image, culminating in DEAD@17's grand finale in February 2015.

In addition to DEAD@17, Josh is also the creator of BLACK HARVEST (Image) and THE LOST BOOKS OF EVE (Viper). He has also collaborated on such works as MONSTER HIGH (Little Brown/Mattel), GHOSTBUSTERS (IDW), and CLUBBING (DC).

Josh lives in Texas with his wife and children. His hobbies include reading, toy collecting, and believing in Sasquatch.

www.joshhoward.net
twitter: @joshuahoward
instagram: josh_howard

"...one of the most thought-provoking character-driven horror tales in years..."
-COMIC SHOP NEWS

Hazy Foss thought she knew everything there was to know about the mundane, average life of her best friend, 17 yr. old Nara Kilday.

But when Nara is brutally murdered by an unknown assailant, a diary is uncovered revealing more about Nara than anyone ever knew. Haunted by sinister voices and terrible visions, Nara had kept her dark side a secret, filling her diary with strange symbols and cryptic messages.

Soon, sinister supernatural forces emerge, creating fear and terror in the once quiet suburb of Darlington Hills. But amidst the chaos, an unlikely savior arises in the form of Nara herself, miraculously returned from the dead.

Armed with just an ax and the secrets buried within her diary, 17 yr. old Nara Kilday may be all that stands between us and the reign of Hell on Earth.

This edition collects all 7 volumes of the fan-favorite indie comic series!

IMAGECOMICS.COM
image
EMPIRE
COMICS & GRAPHIC NOVELS / Horror
RATED T+ / TEEN PLUS

D.R. & QUINCH

JOIN THE EMPIRE, FREE THERMONUCLEAR WEAPONRY - S'RIGHT !!!! (CONDITIONS APPLY)

K6 NW